ACROSS / A13

FVR threatens to quit Lakas if Baby A daughter not endorsed as party candidate

WORLD / A20

China sharply raises military spending

BUSINESS / B1

Stocks plunge 4.5% to lowest in 2 months

NEWS / A2

Landmark antiterror bill becomes law today, says Claudio

METRO / A17

Woman dies after visiting clinic offering cosmetic surgery

[illegible]ittersweet news: 'Ampalaya' is back

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT'S BITTERSWEET NEWS FOR *AMPALAYA* (bitter gourd) lovers.

The vegetable has regained the spot it lost three years ago on the government list of scientifically recognized medicinal plants, following studies showing it has components that lower blood sugar levels.

BITTERSWEET/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, March 6, 2007 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 88 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Candidates can use cell phones to campaign

By Riza T. Olchondra

CGE NA U
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POLITICIANS HAVE A new and potent weapon for election campaigns. It not only comes cheap, it can reach more than 40 million people a day.

The National Telecom-

CANDIDATES/ A8

Vilma asks for one week

'I will think not only as wife, mom, actress but as a leader'

LIPA Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto acknowledges the cheers of her supporters during the flag ceremony at the Lipa City Hall Monday. Mayors and key personalities asked Santos to run against her brother-in-law, Ricky Recto, and incumbent Gov. Armando Sanchez. EDWIN BACASMAS

A DEFIANT Ricky Recto clenches his fist during the Genuine Opposition rally in Batangas City Sunday night. Beside Recto is actor Christopher de Leon who is running for vice governor of Batangas. ROGER MARGALLO

By Marlon Ramos and Marlon Luistro, *Inquirer Southern Luzon,* and Bayani San Diego Jr., *in Manila*

LIPA CITY—ALL SHE was waiting for was a sign and, from all indications, it had come.

Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos, the actress-turned-politician, gave the strongest signal yet that she would run for governor of Batangas province when she told thousands of supporters yesterday that she would make her decision on the matter not as a wife, or a mother, but as a leader of the people.

"I cannot say 'yes' or 'no' because I am emotional ... I don't want to issue any final decision on this day because I am too emotional right now," she told a raucous crowd of some 3,000 supporters. "Please help me pray so that God will enlighten me to make the right decision."

"Give me time. Within a week, I promise you ... this time I will think not only as a wife, as mother and as an actress. But I will

VILMA/ A8

Ruling parties headed for a collision in 2010

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

LAKAS-CMD AND KAMPI ARE HEADED on a collision course in 2010 when the two biggest parties in the country square off for political dominance after President Macapagal-Arroyo steps down from office.

"It's inevitable, Lakas and Kampi will part ways in 2010," said senatorial bet Luis "Chavit" Singson, a Lakas member, in an interview with the INQUIRER. The Ilocos Sur governor even hinted that the two parties might field two different bets in the 2010 presidential election.

Senate President Manuel Villar, Senators Mar Roxas II and Panfilo Lacson and Vice President Noli de Castro have been tagged as the most likely candidates for president then.

Singson said that while the Lakas-Kampi feud had been worsening despite the President's intervention, "this has no bearing on

RULING/ A8

Lakas, Kampi rocket launchers for FVR, GMA

By Fe Zamora

LAKAS AND KAMPI HAVE SOMEthing in common: Both parties were designed as "alternative" rocket launchers for the presidential ambitions of Fidel Ramos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 1992 and 1998, respectively.

Once off the ground, however, both parties were commandeered by professional political operators and politicians who had mastered the art of manipulative politics during the Ferdinand Marcos years, joined by seemingly new faces but who were actually chips of the old political bloc.

Such is the fate of Lakas and Kampi, according to Pastor "Boy"

LAKAS/ A8

More OFWs abandoning their families

By Veronica Uy
www.inquirer.net

MORE AND MORE OVERSEAS FILIPINO workers (OFWs) appear to be abandoning their families, the Center for Migrant Advocacy said yesterday as it called for legal, economic and social support for the affected families.

CMA legal counsel Henry Rojas said a growing number of OFW families were coming to his office for advice on family abandonment.

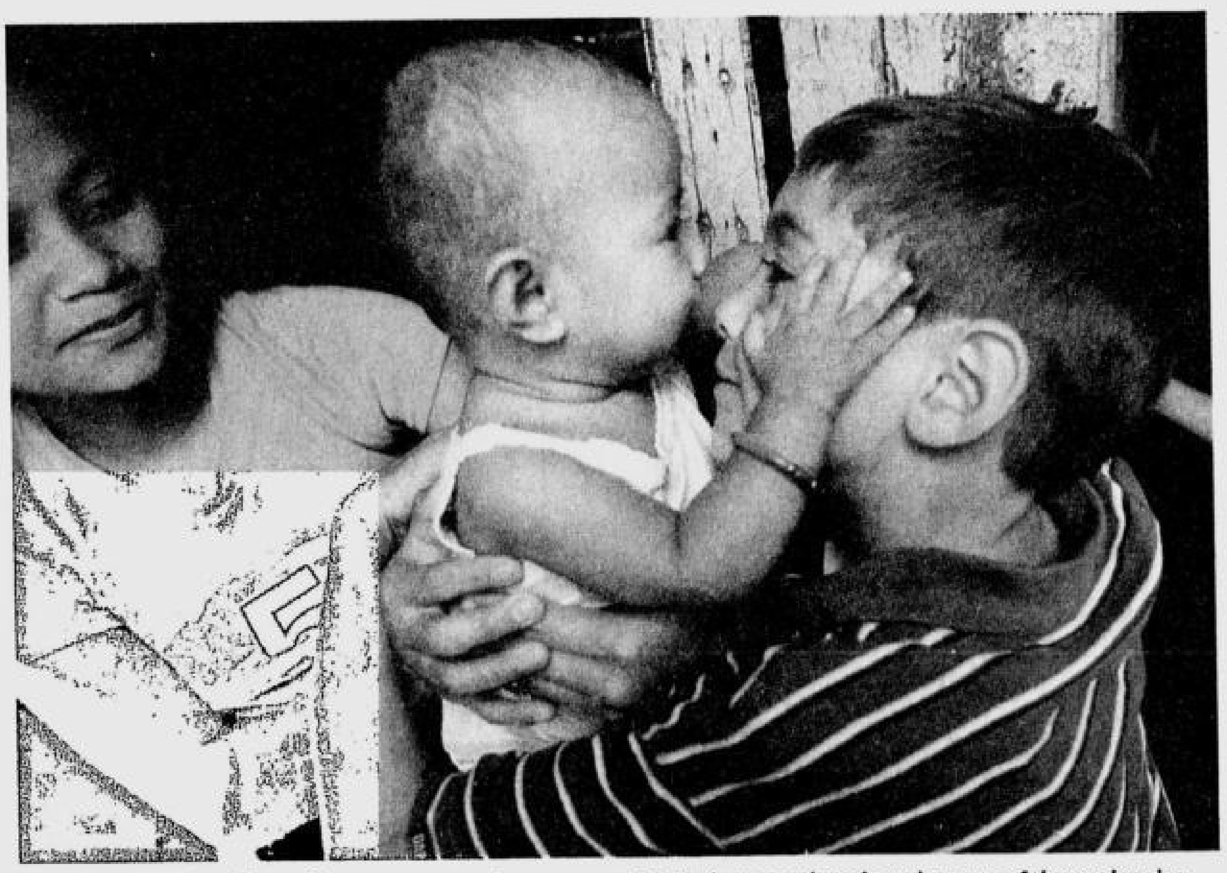
He said that half of the cases handled by another nongovernment organization, Kanlungan, involved family abandonment.

Lawyer Arnulfo Maminta made the same observation in an earlier roundtable discussion organized by the CMA.

On any given week, his office has to

MORE/ A6

HK's richest lend hand to help RP's poorest



THE RICH people of Hong Kong were not only generous with their money but they also gave of themselves by visiting aid recipients in Bacolod City. Here, a young philanthropist cuddles a baby. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By Blanche S. Rivera
Inquirer Correspondent

HONG KONG—THEIRS WAS A QUEST FOR LIFE launched by a dying woman's wish for a coffin.

The lifeline—from the skyscrapers of Hong Kong to the slums of Negros Island and Mindanao—began 15 years ago with the meeting of two very different women.

TAN: Josephine changed her life

Sharon Tin Tan, one of Hong Kong's top interior designers, flew to Bacolod with her Filipino maid in 1992. She had been supporting Bible scholars there, upon the request of her househelp, and wanted to see where her support was going.

What she saw, who she saw, changed her life forever.

There was Josephine, a 21-year-old tuberculosis patient who had been given only two months to live. When she met Tan, Josephine asked for nothing—not medicines, not food—but a coffin and a burial site.

Stung by such hopelessness, the Hong Kong designer who had never been that close to the face of poverty in her life, immediately moved to

HK'S RICHEST/ A15

Metro family needs ₱8,061 a month to meet basic needs

By Doris C. Dumlao

IT'S BECOMING MORE CHALLENGING for Filipinos to maintain an "economically decent" lifestyle, or stay above the poverty line.

A family of five in Metro Manila needs to earn at least P8,061 a month to meet its most basic needs, according to the National Statistical Coordination Board.

NSCB, the agency mandated to report on the country's official poverty statistics, said the poverty threshold for Metro Manila for 2007 had gone up from P7,945 in 2006 and P7,859 in 2005.

"A sole breadwinner in a five-member family residing (in Metro Manila) is expected to find an arduous task in bringing the entire family above the poverty line if he or she only earns at most P265 per day," said NSCB officer in charge Estrella Domingo.

The daily poverty threshold in Metro Manila for this year translates to P266, up from P262 last year and P259 in 2005.

METRO/ A6

EZ2
7 1

FOUR DIGIT
5 2 8 1

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, while Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rains.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/05/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Antiterror bill becomes law today

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WILL SIGN this afternoon the landmark antiterror bill into law, which will take effect two months after the May 14 elections, Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said.

The Human Security Act of 2007 was ratified by Congress during a special session on Feb. 19 during which the House adopted the Senate version approved on Feb. 8.

The President last week said the bill was so important that she wanted to make sure there would be "proper ceremonies" for its signing into law.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President was unlikely to veto any portion of the bill, which Malacañang and its allies deemed to have been watered-down by senators critical of the measure.

"I think that (veto) may not be indicated or called for considering the fact that we don't have any time anymore to insert any changes. You will recall that the House, just so this bill will be passed, adopted in toto the version of the Senate so I think this time any further changes may not be undertaken," Bunye said in a briefing.

"I believe the final version is still acceptable. It's not the perfect bill that we originally envisioned but it's still acceptable," Bunye added.

Bunye said critics of the antiterror bill had nothing else to fear after the administration's priority legislation underwent thorough deliberations and amendments in the Senate.

"I believe this was sufficiently discussed in the Senate itself and those who had expressed apprehensions about the possible human rights violations had inserted some safeguards and these were acceptable to all those who approved the antiterror measure," Bunye said.

Among the safeguards instituted in the final version was the provision that its effectivity will be two months after the May 14 balloting to address apprehensions by the political opposition and militant organizations that the law would be used against them.

The measure, embodied in Senate Bill No. 2137 and House Bill No. 4839, also enshrines the rights of people detained on suspicion of terror or conspiracy to commit terrorism.

The bill seeks to impose a prison term of 40 years on any act of terrorism, and allows the detention of suspects for three days without charges, the wiretapping of communications of terror suspects and the monitoring of bank accounts. The bill also provides for the outlawing of groups suspected of mounting terrorist attacks.

The Philippines was under pressure from the United States and other countries to pass an antiterror law because of the presence of Islamic extremists with links to Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaida terror networks.

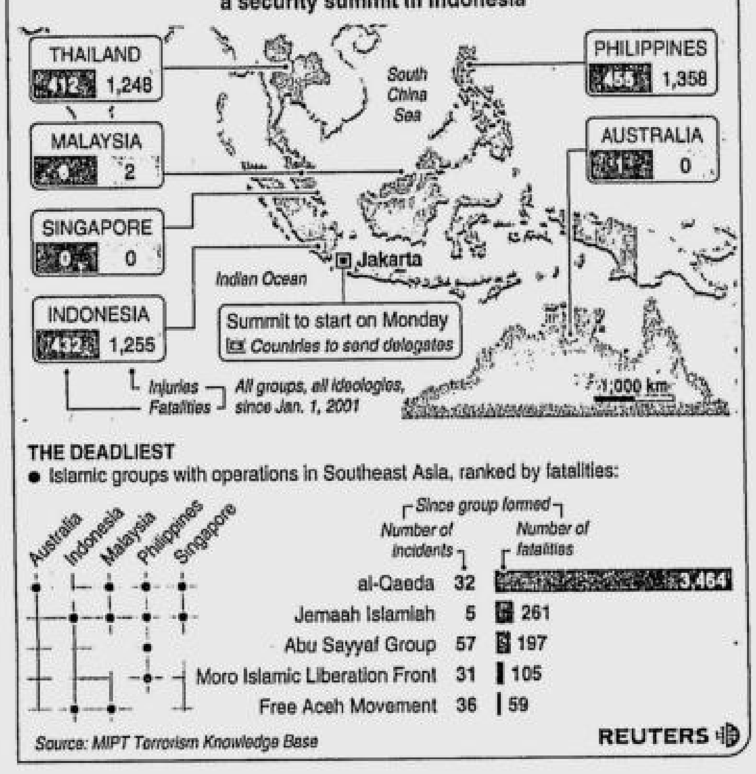
The President earlier hailed the antiterror bill as an "institutional landmark of the 13th Congress at a time when the world looks upon the Philippines as a strong global player in the fight against terror."

"A Philippine Anti-Terror Law will stand beside the Asean antiterrorism accord to consolidate the common fight across borders and help bring forth greater security, more vibrant trade and a stronger hand to defeat poverty throughout the region," Ms Arroyo said.

"Now that we have more legal teeth in this fight, we shall continue to sharpen the intelligence and operational capabilities of the Armed Forces and police, modernize and further professionalize them, and broaden the domestic and international alliances that will give us the edge to win and prevail," she said.

SOUTHEAST ASIA SECURITY

Militant group Jemaah Islamiah may have gone quiet but its radical wing is keen to mount new attacks and poses the biggest threat to Southeast Asian security, Australia said on Friday ahead of a security summit in Indonesia



Source: MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base

REUTERS

RP, 5 nations talk terror in Jakarta

JAKARTA, INDONESIA—INDONESIAN PRISONS are a weak link in the country's fight against terrorism, with militants often emerging more organized and committed to violence than before they were jailed, a top antiterror official said yesterday.

Indonesian Gen. Ansyad Mbai made the remarks on the sidelines of a six-nation conference aimed at strengthening cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Southeast Asia, which has seen a string of attacks and failed plots by the al-Qaida linked Jemaah Islamiyah.

Countries represented at the meeting in Jakarta include the Philippines, which is fighting the Abu Sayyaf bandits; Thailand, where militants are engaged in a bloody campaign for an Islamic state in the south, and Malaysia and Singapore, which have both locked up scores of militants in recent years.

"We owe it to our citizens to wage an effective battle against terrorism," said Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda, adding more regional cooperation was needed to "counter the clever and seductive propaganda of the terrorists."

Jemaah Islamiyah's core members are Indonesians and Malaysians who fought in Afghanistan. Though the regional terror network has been damaged by arrests in recent years, police warn that several of its members remain on the run and are likely planning new attacks.

The Australian and Indonesian foreign ministers said nations had made progress against Islamic terrorism in the region, but that radicals were continually changing tactics and remained a threat.

"We have foiled terrorist plots, captured and prosecuted terrorists and disrupted their networks, but they are still out there," said Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer. "Even as our capacity to stop them improves, their methods and abilities become more sophisticated."

Indonesia has arrested and prosecuted almost 200 militants with direct or supporting roles in attacks on its soil, the most deadly being the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings that killed 202 people, 88 of them Australian tourists.

Mbai said militants should not be allowed to mix together in jail as they do now, saying terror leaders were able to give religious instruction to other terrorists as well as common criminals.

He also noted a recent case in which Indonesian police seized a laptop from a notorious militant who they said used it to communicate with sympathizers outside the prison.

"The prisoners should be treated specially, they should be split up from one another," Mbai told reporters. "We must not allow them to become united, stronger and more radical while they are in jail."

Militants file charges vs AFP for poll violation

By Jerome Aning and Nikko Dizon

MILITANT GROUPS YESTERDAY FILED A complaint against the Armed Forces of the Philippines for allegedly campaigning against leftist party-list groups in violation of election laws prohibiting the military from engaging in partisan political activities.

The complaint was lodged before the Commission on Elections after the AFP fielded soldiers armed with automatic rifles in Metro Manila barangays last week.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said he was waiting for an official AFP report but emphasized that his agency could not intervene in "purely military operations." However, if the military is interfering in a strictly political activity, the Comelec can take cognizance of the case, Abalos said, adding that it could be a "test case."

"If there is intimidation, that is different," he said. "This is in violation of election laws."

Leftist groups denounced the deployment of troops in the capital.

"Election or no election, the military has no business patrolling the (metropolitan) communities," said Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bayan Muna. "This is clearly undeclared martial law," said leftist leader Elmer Labog.

Anakpawis and its allied groups—Pamalakaya, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap—charged AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and five other security officials with electioneering and partisan political activities.

Their 14-page complaint included Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and Chief Presidential Counsel Sergio Apostol.

Anakpawis said Esperon and Gonzales had repeatedly and maliciously accused the leftist party-list groups of being front organizations of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

Anakpawis secretary general Cherry Clemente accused the AFP of engaging in threats, intimidation, terrorism, use of fraudulent devices and other forms of coercion and intervention in partisan political activities.

"Our case against Esperon and company merits their en masse resignations from the military and public services and the bringing of appropriate criminal charges against them," Clemente said.

Anakpawis has two seats in the House of Representatives and is participating in the May elections.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said the Philippine National Police did not see anything wrong with the troop deployment in Metro Manila. "Their presence is not in violation of any law," the PNP spokesperson told reporters.

"Anticrime operations are the mandate of the PNP. But help from anyone is welcome and needed," Pagdilao said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Alcuin Papa; AP*

Party-list posters in NPA hands raises questions

WHAT WERE THE CAMPAIGN POSTERS AND calendars of Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño and Joel Virador doing at a New People's Army hideout?

The question was posed by officers of the Philippine Army yesterday after the campaign materials of the leftist party-list organization were found in the aftermath of a bloody encounter between government forces and NPA rebels in Davao City last week.

"We challenge the NPA leadership to prove they are in no way associated with any political group that is running for election in May," Army spokesperson Maj. Ernesto Torres told reporters.

Torres said the campaign materials were found following a clash between troops of Delta Company of the 73rd Infantry Battalion led by 2nd Lt. Ulysses Mendoza and an NPA group in Barangay Eden, Toril, Davao City, on Feb.28.

The encounter left two soldiers dead—Staff Sgt. Conrado Nequiez and Gary Lopez, a member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu).

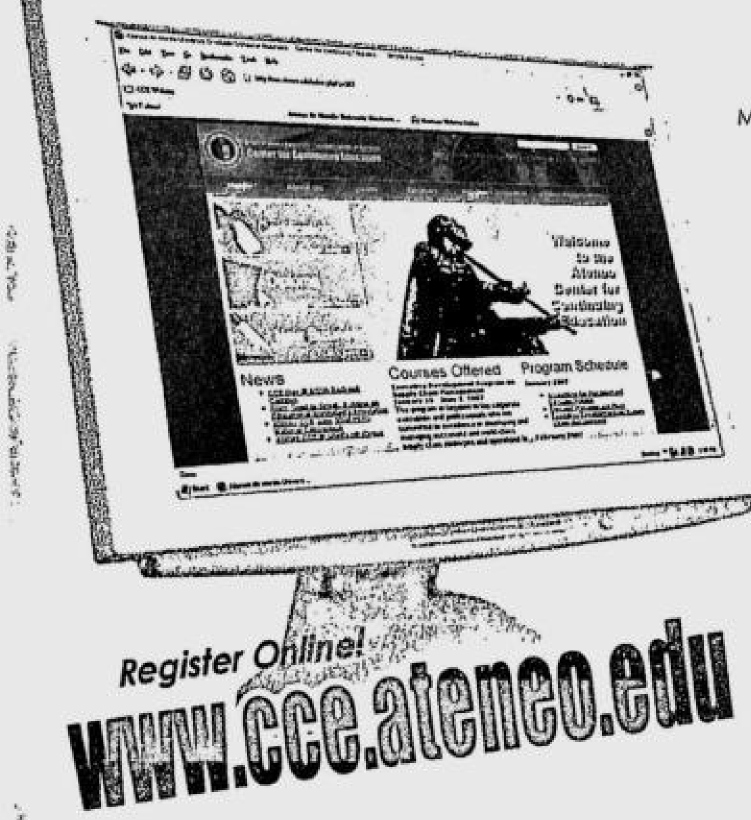
Torres said the Army believed three rebels were killed in the firefight.

Torres said he expected the militant party-list group to say the campaign materials had been planted by the soldiers, but he denied this was the case.

Militant party-list groups had earlier denounced the military and the Arroyo administration for trying to prevent them from participating in the coming election.

In Davao City, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane said the government might succeed in ending the 30-year-old communist insurgency earlier than its 2010 deadline.

"We are ahead of schedule," Ebdane said. "We want to fast-track this and we can do it earlier than expected." *Christine O. Avendaño; Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*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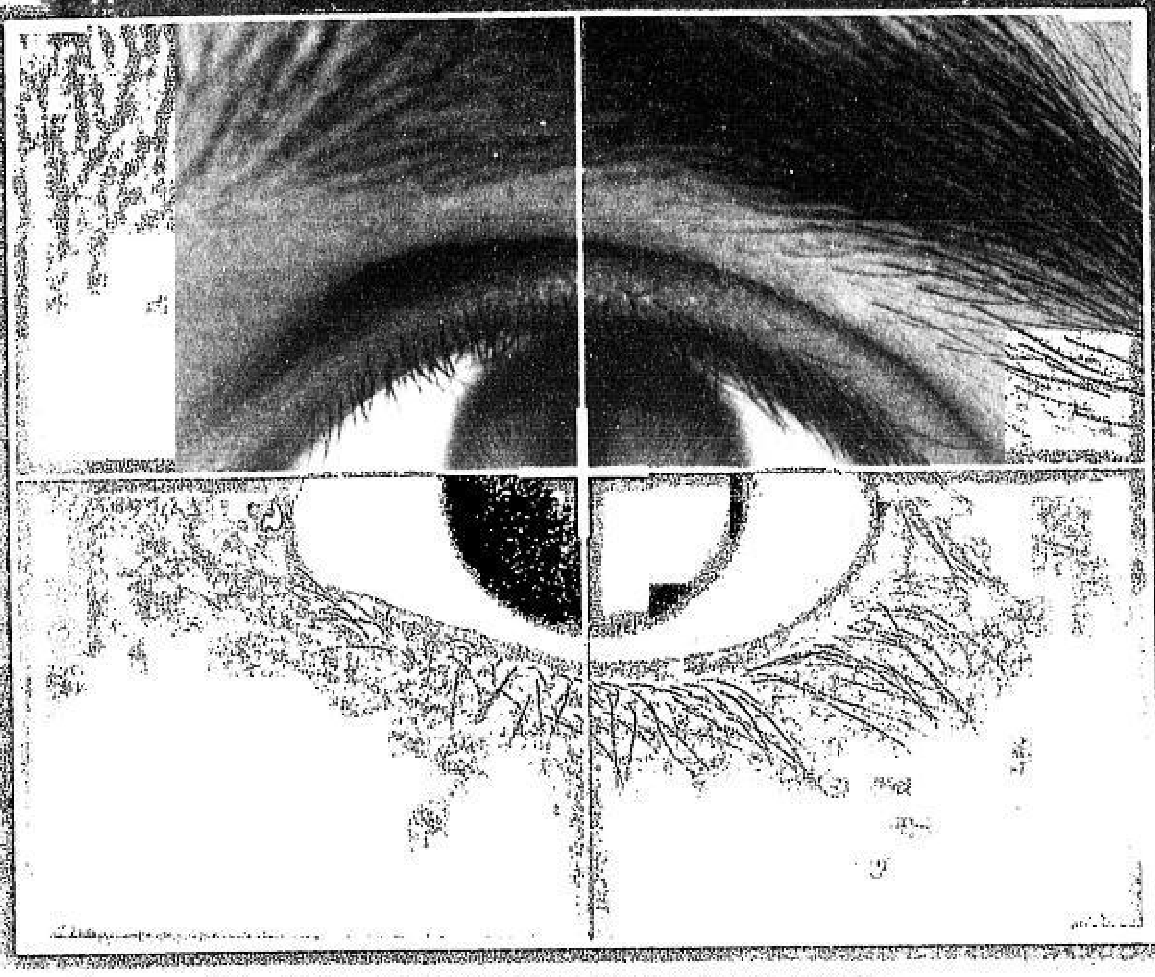

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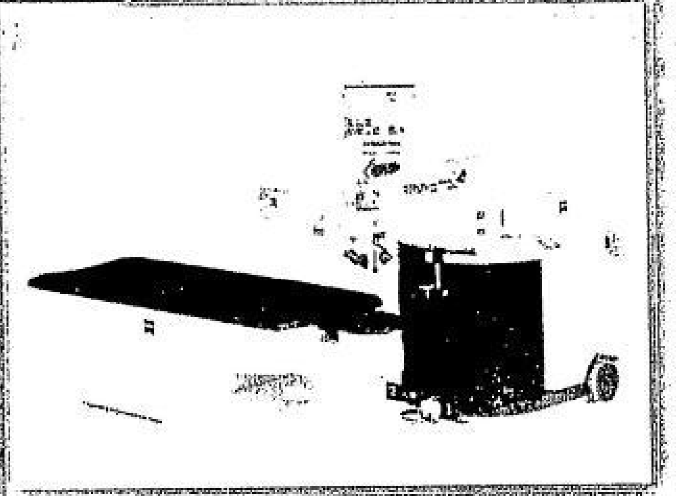

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Montano to debate politics, economy

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

MOVIE ACTOR AND SENATORIAL bet Cesar Montano is ready to share his views on politics and the economy in the March 14 debate, according to Team Unity spokesperson Joseph "Ace" Durano.

Durano said Team Unity might have no need for the attendance of the opposition in the debate, to be sponsored by business groups, because the administration bets themselves have different views on key issues such as Charter change.

Durano said he expected all of the administration candidates to show up in the debate where they would be grilled by an independent panel from the media and academe.

Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Francis "Chiz" Escudero meanwhile yesterday said the proposed debate between GO and Team Unity bets should cover all issues facing the country, including those on electoral fraud and corruption.

Escudero stressed that Team Unity cannot challenge GO to a debate and then limit the issues to those the administration team wished to discuss, including the upbeat local economy.

"We are willing to talk about the economy. But the other side should not limit issues to the economy," he said in a news conference at his campaign headquarters in Quezon City yesterday.

"It's like entering a boxing ring and they've already chosen the referee and the venue. And then we're further told that we cannot throw this or that punch," Escudero added.

He said the administration slate should be willing to tackle issues like corruption and election fraud that had yet to be resolved.

"If they will say that we should not tackle such issues because they already belong to the past, then we might as well concede that they will always win these debates," Escudero said.

The debates should be held in a venue accessible to people from all walks of life such as Plaza Miranda, not in a hotel or convention center, he added.

"I hope that brown-skinned people in shorts will also be allowed to witness the debate," Escudero said.

In a briefing yesterday at Team Unity's headquarters in Makati City, Durano said while the administration slate would prefer that Montano answers questions covering his areas of advocacy (arts, children and tourism), he would have to share his views on political and economic matters such as the foreign exchange rate and the stock market.

"If his answer is not clear, we can clarify for him," said Durano, who clarified that he was neither the "guardian nor *yaya* (nursemaid)" of the candidates. "They are basically on their own on stage."

Montano was the last-minute replacement to fill the void left by Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla, who decided to seek reelection a few days after Team Unity included him on its official list.

The actor admitted that he had zero experience in politics and that he had asked Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs, Gabriel Claudio for a "crash course" in politics.

In his sorties so far, Montano rarely answers questions on serious matters and usually digressed by talking about his childhood, his roots and past civic positions.

Bets need Comelec OK to hand out caps, pens, etc.

By Jerome Aning

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS CHAIR BENjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday said political parties and candidates needed to seek the permission of the poll body before they could use propaganda materials such as caps, shirts and fans.

In a press conference, Abalos invoked Comelec's general authority to regulate "all other forms of election propaganda not prohibited by the Omnibus Election Code" as provided for by Section 3.5 of Republic Act No. 9006 or the Fair Elections Act of 2001.

This after the Philippine National Police said it was ready to go after violators of the law on campaign materials which includes the use of T-shirts, hats, pins and pens.

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao told reporters yesterday they were just waiting for formal orders from the Comelec before they started arresting violators.

"While caps, T-shirts, etc., are no longer unlawful election propaganda, they're not expressly mentioned as lawful propaganda under Section 3 of RA 9006," Abalos told reporters.

"This is not to say that caps, T-shirts, etc., cannot be used as campaign materials; Section 3 says they can be used, but subject to conditions such as the limitation on authorized expenses of candidates and political parties, observance of truth in advertising, and supervision and regulations of the Comelec," he said.

He pointed out that Section 12 of Comelec Resolution No. 7767, passed on Nov. 30, 2006, to implement RA 9006, says any person seeking authority to use other forms of election propaganda must file a corresponding petition before the poll body. *With Alcuin Papa*

ELECTION '07

Salonga, Morato rap show biz candidates

Jerry E. Esplanada

A MOVIE STAR WHO IS NO MORE than a movie star will be incompetent in the House of Representatives or the Senate.

This "friendly reminder" came from no less than former Senate President Jovito Salonga and it was addressed to movie stars and other celebrities running in the May elections.

"But a movie star who can be versatile and can study and improve, *pwede na rin* (that's sufficient). The best example is (the late US president and former actor) Ronald Reagan," Salonga told the INQUIRER.

The ex-chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government is not a Vilmanian, but he advises those interested in joining Congress to first do a Vilma Santos.

The popular actress "studied in the University of the Philippines in the school of public administration," Salonga pointed out. "And she's doing very well as mayor of Lipa City."

But "the trouble with other movie stars and celebrities is they have nothing to show," said the 86-year-old ex-legislator.

Salonga, who is also a Liberal Party stalwart, did not name names.

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office Director Manuel "Maneling" Morato, meanwhile, is at it again—spewing venom, that is.

Not known for keeping his mouth shut, the former chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) said show biz folk had no business being in Congress.

"They're not cut out for the lawmaking process. It's an entirely different ballgame. That has been my stand all these years," Morato said. "Actors should get real."

Like Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the ex-PCSO chair asserted that actors who did not have any competence in public administration or legislation should not exploit their popularity by running for Congress.

"They may be fit for the post of mayor or governor; fine, but senator or congressman? I don't think so," he said.

During the 2004 presidential elections, Morato trained his sights on the late action king Fernando Poe Jr.

He also took a swipe at Poe's handlers for "making it appear that Poe is an image model for (Filipino) beer drinkers."

Morato continues to be a staunch defender of President Macapagal-Arroyo, but don't expect him to back actor-senatorial bets in the administration's Team Unity ticket like Cesar Montano and Vicente "Tito" Sotto.

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Correction

IN THE MARCH 4 issue, the "Tessa" column of Tessa Prieto-Valdes on Page D1—"Feeling pearly and celebratory"—misstated that St. Theresa's College Quezon City holds its homecoming every February. The college holds its homecoming on the last Saturday of January. It is STC Manila that holds its homecoming in February.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Nene: Using 'jueteng' funds lesser evil

NAGA CITY—SEN. AQUILINO "NENE" Pimentel has no doubt that money from "jueteng," the illegal numbers game, will be used to finance election campaigns.

He said, however, that using jueteng money was the lesser evil compared to using public funds.

Pimentel, secretary general of the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban), cited the "blessing" of President Macapagal-Arroyo, which made possible the gubernatorial bid of Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected jueteng lord Bong Pineda.

Pineda is running against reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid of Pampanga, another ally of Ms Arroyo's.

Pimentel said the issue of spending the public's money to fund a candidate's campaign had been raised by the Genuine Opposition (GO).

Another issue being pushed by the opposition was the resolution of the extrajudicial killings that has hounded the Arroyo administration since it assumed the reins of government in 2001.

Pimentel said the opposition sought "to put an end to the continuing violations of the rule of law" that had caused the continuing slide of Ms Arroyo's popularity. *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 6, 2007
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading:	Is 1:10, 16-20
Gospel:	Matthew 23:1-12

Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees sat on the seat of Moses. So you shall do and observe all they say, but do not do as they do, for they do not do what they say. They tie up heavy burdens and load them on the shoulders of the people, but they do not even raise a finger to move them. They do everything in order to be seen by people; so they wear very wide bands of the Law around their foreheads, and robes with large tassels. They enjoy the first place at feasts and reserved seats in the synagogues, and being greeted in the marketplace and being called 'Master' by the people.

"But you, do not let yourselves be called Master because you have only one Master, and all of you are brothers and sisters. Neither should you call anyone on earth Father, because you have only one Father, he who is in heaven. Nor should you be called leader, because Christ is the only leader for you. Let the greatest among you be the servant of all. For whoever makes himself great shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be made great."

Commentary

We do not like to think of ourselves as Sodom or Gomorrah—a people known for their wickedness, sexual promiscuity, greed, and insulting behaviors before God. But that is what and who we are. And Isaiah calls us back: cease doing evil, learn to do good. And again it is doing justice for the wronged, the orphan, the widow, the poor. If only we would obey and not continue to resist and refuse. We must choose: the sword that destroys us as our deeds come back to us or setting things right with the Lord.

Jesus uses the example of the leaders-to do what they say, but not what they do. Their words are bold but their deeds few (sadly our own leaders in our communities and church would most probably be taken to task and spoken about in the same way today). We are to open our eyes and see that our leaders bind up heavy loads and lay them on others' shoulders but don't lift a finger to help. Instead of following in their footsteps we are to be servants and humbly make sure that those who are burdened receive our help.

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Honasan affirms independent stance

ACCUSED COUP PLOTTER GREGORIO "Gringo" Honasan will not be the 12th candidate in the senatorial lineup of the Genuine Opposition and neither will he seek to join any other political group.

Honasan, who decided to run for senator even while under detention at Fort Sto. Domingo in Laguna for his alleged participation in the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny, said yesterday he would continue to campaign as an independent after being asked if he would seek to join the GO ticket which was left one man short after of Sen. Francisco Pangilinan was dumped.

"I am running as an independent and any support, unsolicited, must be for programs," Honasan told reporters.

He said his family would continue to court votes for him, adding that the approach had been effective in view of his "competitive standing" as reflected in surveys.

"The Filipino people, my wife and my children are campaigning and I think it's showing—the effectiveness of the campaign," he said.

Also yesterday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Honasan told him he was willing to reconcile with the government.

"He said so, he is open all the time to a reconciliation with the government. But there was no definition of terms," Gonzalez told reporters after meeting with the senatorial candidate.

He said Honasan told him he supported the policies of the government, especially those touching on economic matters.

Asked about Gonzalez's statement, Honasan's lawyer, Daniel Gutierrez, said Honasan was actually calling for a national reconciliation of the Filipino people so that politics would not get in the way of the country's progress. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Media watchdog monitoring poll coverage

By Tarra Quismundo

UNDERLINING THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN helping the electorate vote correctly, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) has begun a three-month review of the election reportage of leading media outlets in order to assess their performance in this election.

Despite limited manpower and resources, the CMFR has started monitoring the election coverage of three major dailies and six television news programs, reprising its effort during the 2004 elections.

Informed choices

"It's important because we want to know how the media are providing the public the information it needs so that it can make informed choices. The usual complaint in the Philippines is that we haven't been choosing our leaders very well, so one of the ways the media can help in that area is by providing the information that the people need," CMFR deputy director and journalism professor Luis Teodoro said.

The monitoring began on Feb. 13 with the review of the content of election reportage on ABS-CBN's primetime newscasts TV Patrol World and Bandila, GMA 7's 24 Oras and Saksi, ABC 5's Sentro and government-owned station NBN-4's Primetime Teledyaryo. The daily television monitoring will end on May 11.

The following day, monitoring of the front page stories in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Manila Bulletin and the Philippine Star began to end on May 12, or two days before the midterm elections.

Criteria for broadcast news includes the length of time devoted to candidates, issues reporting, coverage of the campaign trail, personality-based reporting, backgrounding, bias and sourcing.

Newspaper stories are analyzed according to content, prominence on the page, sourcing, context, slant and focus on the campaign, issues and personalities, among other criteria.

Due to constraints in resources, the CMFR excluded radio, tabloids and online news services.

'Focused on the popular'

"Hopefully, if you're monitoring the media, you'll find out how well the media are performing, then media that can help the media improve... One of the failings of the media in the past is that they were focused on the popular," Teodoro told the INQUIRER.

"In other words, there's still a need for media to focus on what the candidates are for, what they intend to do with power once they have it, instead of focusing on who's popular, who's leading in the polls," Teodoro said following a roundtable discussion of the CMFR project at the Ateneo Professional Schools in Makati City.

Ideally, he said, media organizations must place their election coverage within the larger context: What's at stake for the nation in the coming elections.

Turning point

He pointed out the May polls would be a turning point for Philippine politics as it would serve as an opportunity to settle issues that arose from the May 2004 elections, among these, the allegations of administration-machinated massive cheating, human rights violations, and militarization.

"For example, if the opposition wins control of the House, then maybe the impeachment can take place. Then we'll finally know, was there fraud? Then the crisis can finally be resolved. Whereas, if the opposition loses, [the drift] will continue," he said.

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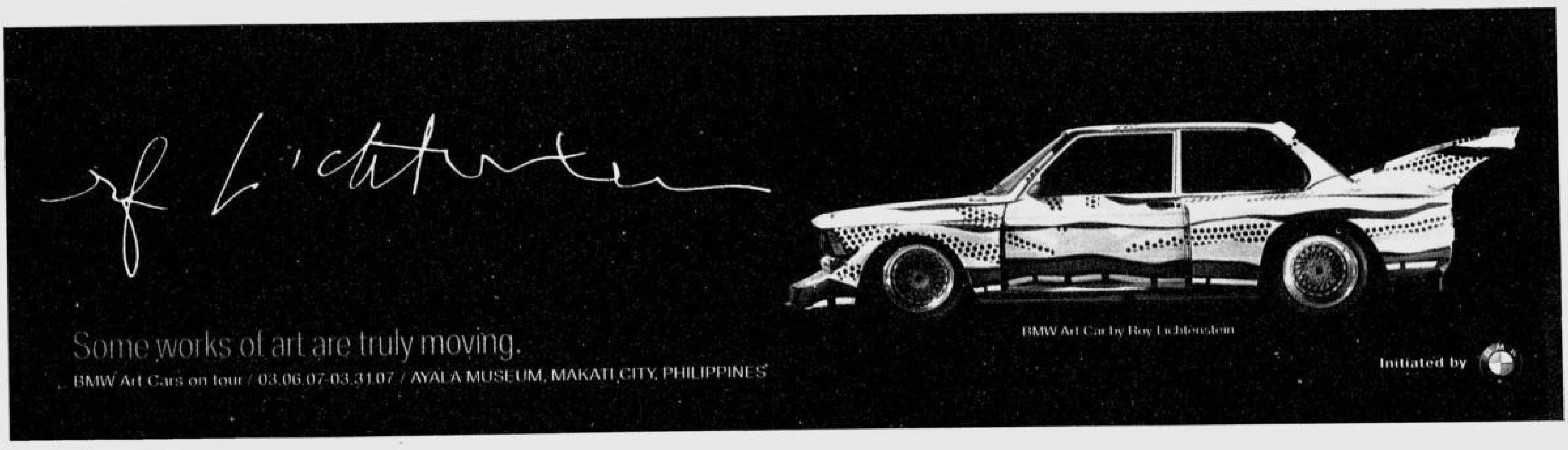
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Gov't targets 1.9% population growth rate by 2010, says Cabral

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BAGO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT IS TARgeting a 1.9-percent annual population growth rate by 2010, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said Sunday.

"A census conducted in 2000 showed the Philippine population growth rate was 2.36 percent and in a census this year we are estimating that it will go down to 2.0 percent," Cabral said here.

The National Statistics Office estimated that the country's population would rise from between 86.79 million and 87.09 million last year to between 88.46 million and 88.87 million this year.

To accomplish the 1.9-percent population growth target, national government agencies have been tasked with giving capacity training for natural family planning methods, according to Cabral.

Local governments are assigned to provide other means of contraception.

Cabral said a lower population growth was important in achieving the country's development goals.

"Our moves toward development and the improvement of the quality of life of the people will be hampered if our population growth rate continues at a very high rate," she said.

Dr. Nafis Sadik, UN Special Envoy for HIV and AIDS for Asia and the Pacific, shared Cabral's views.

"All countries now accept that population is at the heart of development, and that achieving gender equality and universal reproductive health is vital to the reduction of poverty and the promotion of human well-being," Sadik said.

She urged the Philippines to develop a strong and culturally responsive population policy that "supports the right of all women and men to make free, responsible and informed choices."

Cabral and Sadik came to Bago City for the 20th death anniversary of Rafael Salas, former executive director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

Metro family needs ₱8,061 ...

From page A1

A total of P4,804 (P159 a day) or 60 percent of the P8,061 necessary to stay out of poverty is needed to meet the most basic food needs, the NSCB said.

The country needs to post a growth of 6-7 percent in gross domestic product for two to three years for the poor to benefit more, said Astro del Castillo, a managing director at an investment management firm, First Grade Holdings.

Despite the 25 quarters of consecutive economic growth posted by the country, the growth must accelerate at a faster pace to create more jobs, Del Castillo said.

"Look at Vietnam and China, which have been consistently growing by 8 to 10 percent. We have to do more but it's not solely the responsibility of the government or the business sector," he said.

National poverty line

The cost of maintaining an economically decent lifestyle is highest in Metro Manila, where the poverty threshold for this year is 30 percent higher than the national average of P6,195 a month or P204 a day.

The national poverty line has increased from P6,003 a month or P198 a day in 2006 and from P5,916 a month or P195 a day in 2005.

On an annual per capita basis, the poverty threshold for 2007 is P14,866, of which P9,987 was estimated for basic food needs.

The annual per capita threshold for Metro Manila is higher than any other region at P19,345, up from P19,067 in 2006 and P18,859 in 2005.

Among the provinces, the amount of an "economically decent" lifestyle is highest in Abra as it posted an annual per capita poverty threshold of P18,058.

Of the 10 provinces with the highest poverty thresholds, nine are in Luzon and one in Mindanao.

The poverty threshold is lowest in Siquijor at P11,663, followed by Negros Oriental at P12,012 and Cagayan at P12,479.

Of the 10 provinces with the lowest poverty thresholds in 2007, three are in Luzon, six in the Visayas and one in Mindanao.

"Generally, families residing in urban areas need to earn 20 percent more than families falling within the ridge of the poverty threshold in rural areas.

Also, to meet their basic food needs for the year, residents of urban areas are expected to spend 20 percent higher than their rural counterparts," Domingo said.

Minimum wage

The minimum wage in Metro Manila is P350 per day.

Recently, Congress passed bills granting across-the-board minimum wage increases. But Malacañang threatened to veto any bill granting a wage increase.

Economists warned that a legislated wage increase would end up costing more in terms of higher production costs, inflation and unemployment.

Jose Leo Lemuel Caparas Jr., an economist at the University of Asia and the Pacific, said in a recent study: "The minimum wage hike bills approved by Congress are like bikinis. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital. Often highlighted are the benefits, but the costs remain in the background."

Usually, he said, an increase in the minimum wage should be cause for celebration. After all, a legislated wage increase is not market-driven and would allow people to get more money without doing much.

Predominantly single

Caparas said studies conducted by UA&P on rank-and-file employees found that:

- Workers at the lower wage levels are the new entrants to firms and are predominantly single. Their incomes are likely to supplement only the earnings of the heads of their families. Among the workers in this group, it's hard to find cases of workers earning less than what is required for their basic needs; and,
- Workers in the higher income categories are usually those who have been in the company for some time. Despite their higher salaries, however, a significant number of them earn less than they require for a decent family life because their needs have risen.

They have a bigger family to support. The changes in their salaries have failed to keep pace with the changes in their family situation.

"These findings suggest firms must turn to instruments other than the minimum wage to guarantee a decent life for their workers. The problems they urgently need to solve are those faced by non-minimum wage workers whose incomes cannot support their families," Caparas said.

He said the existing minimum wage was more than sufficient to cover the basic needs of minimum wage earners.

He said a single individual in Metro Manila would need about P190 to P270 a day to satisfy his or her basic needs.

More OFWs ...

From page A1

deal with a family member requesting that an OFW's departure be put on hold because of a claim for support.

Maminta said this was often the only recourse the families had because they lacked resources to file cases against the errant provider.

But any hold-departure order from the Bureau of Immigration needs a preceding order from the Department of Justice, according to Maminta.

Rojas agreed that limited access to legal advice—especially on how to serve the complaint, how to receive the answers, and how to file similar cases abroad—was a major problem among families abandoned by OFWs.

"Another problem that most of these families confront is the impossibility of enforcing local court judgments abroad. It's well and good if the OFW has property here that can be attached, but most of the time the only income is derived from earnings abroad," he said.

An estimated 10 percent of Filipinos work or live abroad. Last year, a total of 1,083,568 documented OFWs were deployed to more than 190 destinations, according to Labor Secretary Arturo D. Brion.

To help the abandoned families, Maminta suggested that the Philippines finalize bilateral agreements on court judgments with other countries.

The Declaration for the Protection and Promotion of Migrant Workers' Rights, signed during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in January, is useless in this case because it is just a declaration, according to Rojas.

"There are no implementing mechanisms for this and other cases. The problems are stacked up against the abandoned families," he said.

Rojas suggested that cases of family abandonment be exempt from court fees, that the Public Attorney's Office expand its scope to include this special category, and that an agency on abandoned families be created.

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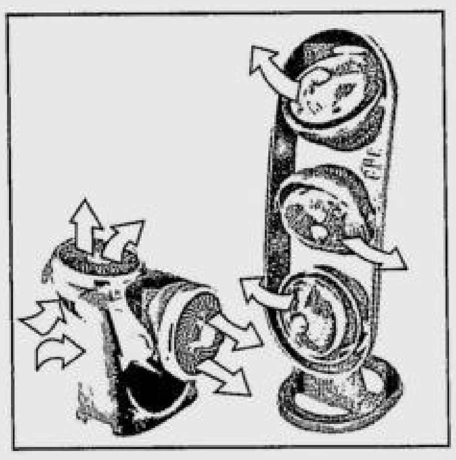

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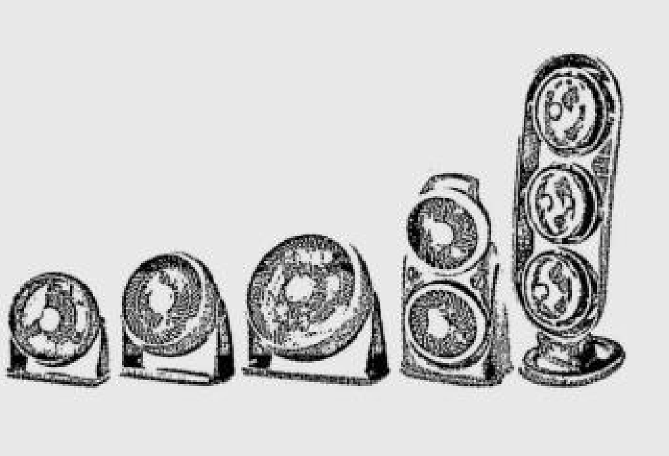

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Russia, too, interested in hiking RP investment

By Michael Lim Ubac

NOT ONLY THE UNITED STATES but Russia, too, wants to put more money in the Philippines.

A Russian trade and investment mission yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo at Malacañang to discuss Russia's target of increasing its two-way trade with the Philippines from the present $200 million to $2 billion.

The US said on Friday that it was increasing its investments in the country from last year's $2 billion to $3 billion this year.

Robert Sears, executive director of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, told President Arroyo during a roundtable discussion at Malacañang that the figure could go up to $9 billion if the government would "take care of some red tape issues."

Mikhail Nikolaev, deputy chair of the Council of the Russian Federal Assembly, told the President his mission wanted to look into "many unexplored areas" of investment in the Philippines and into "products of interest to both sides."

"Our mission has great support from our head of government," said Nikolaev, stressing that the increased investment was part of Moscow's move to expand its bilateral relations with Manila and other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and East Asia.

President Arroyo welcomed the news, telling Nikolaev and his delegation that "Russia is a very important country to the Philippines. We would like Russia to be more economically engaged in the Asean and East Asia."

Ms Arroyo told Moscow's emissaries that the Philippines, which currently holds the chairmanship of the Asean, "is the coordinator on relations with Russia" within the Asean group of nations.

She then urged Russia to become a "full dialogue partner" of Asean and East Asia.

"I hope your visit would contribute to that aspiration," Ms Arroyo told Nikolaev.

The latter replied that Russia wanted to participate more in assisting small businesses in the region.

For instance, Nikolaev said, the mission had a "keen interest" in Cebu's custom-designed furniture made of materials indigenous to the Philippines, tropical fruits and aquaculture products to be distributed to the Siberian countries within the Russian federation.

Before the meeting ended, the delegation conferred on Ms Arroyo Russia's Presidential Star Medal which had been earlier awarded to leading statesmen such as former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and former Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson.

The trade mission, which arrived in Manila Saturday, will go to Cebu and Bohol during its eight-day tour.

The visit of the Russians was the first large-scale mission to Manila since the Russian Federation was founded in 1992, after the fall of its predecessor, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, said Malacañang.

Besides Nikolaev, the delegation is composed mainly of members of the Eastern Dimension International Public Movement, a nongovernment organization created to assist in the rapid development of the Russian economy, especially in Siberia and the Far East, through the expansion of Russia-Asean cooperation in the economic, cultural and scientific fields.

Naia 3 opening delayed again; more structural defects found

By Tarra Quismundo

THE MUCH-TRUMPETED opening of the controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport's (Naia) Terminal 3 has been postponed anew as structural defects were detected in the idle facility scheduled to partially operate by the end of the month.

Citing expert advice, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) yesterday announced its decision to shelve the planned "rolling opening" of the multimillion-dollar terminal "to ensure the public's safety against structural defects."

In a statement, Miaa General Manager Alfonso Cusi said the board decided to defer the opening upon the recommendation of structural experts who had been asked to check the building's integrity following the collapse of a gypsum board ceiling at its arrival area on March 27 last year.

TCGI Engineers Inc. and Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd, firms contracted to review Naia 3's structural design and construction warned Cusi that partially operating the terminal would place passengers, airline and airport personnel at risk.

"The use of the facility at this time, even in a limited scale, is not advisable as this will expose users of the facility to life safety risks. It is important that the deficiencies identified in the structural evaluation are fully addressed before the facility can be used," said Ove Arup in a letter to the general manager.

TCGI experts also told Cusi: "We are convinced that if Terminal 3 is now operated even on a limited scale as contemplated in the planned 'rolling opening,' users of the facility, such as passengers, well-wishers, airport personnel and other occupants will be exposed to life safety risks, most especially in the event of a major earthquake."

The firm also noted that while the terminal's foundation was stable, "the structure of Terminal 3, as constructed, has not fully complied with the original design intent developed by the structural designer."

TCGI recommended repairs at the terminal, including "remediation works... on a number of beams, girders and post-tension slabs, as well as columns and piles."

In the past months, airport authorities have been preparing for the terminal's "rolling opening," a test run where a few flights would be accommodated at the terminal to check its readiness for full operation, particularly passenger and baggage handling, and its security system.

A source at the airport said the Miaa board met with the engineering consultants in a "special board meeting" last Friday to discuss the structural assessment.

"The report showed that there would be risk to the public if Naia 3 is opened. And it is a technical matter, so nobody questioned it," said the source, who was present at the meeting but declined to be named in deference to officials.

Cusi sent a letter to Ken Kurebayashi, project director of the Takenaka Corp. for the Naia 3 project, seeking speedy action to "rectify the defects in the structural works of the terminal."

Japanese contractor Takenaka Corp. was hired by Naia 3's builder, the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), to construct the facility.

The government has, however, gained control over the facility by partially paying Piatco for the terminal's total construction cost.

The Supreme Court had earlier voided Piatco's controversial contract.

The government has made a P3.2 billion downpayment for the Naia 3's construction which it appraised at $320 million (P15.6 billion).

Major's wife says break-ins may be military harassment

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE HOUSE OF AN ARMY MAJOR facing trial for his alleged involvement in last year's coup was broken into on Saturday, prompting his wife to say the military brass might have had something to do with it.

It was the second break-in at Maj. Jason Aquino's residence, located inside the sprawling Camp Aguinaldo compound in Quezon City, his wife Marife said in a radio interview the other day.

And like the first incident on Feb. 3, she said, the latest break-in happened in "broad daylight," with those behind it striking between 12:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. last Saturday, again carting away valuables from the home.

Aquino told radio station dzBB that this time, pieces of jewelry such as her bracelets and her husband's wedding ring and a cellular phone were taken from the couple's bedroom.

In the first break-in, she said, aside from some pieces of jewelry and two cell phones, taken as well were her husband's laptop computer and his "baby" Armalite service rifle.

She said she believed the two break-ins were related to the case of her husband, who along with military officers led by Scout Ranger commander Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, are facing court-martial proceedings on mutiny charges in connection with last year's coup attempt.

Aquino and military officers implicated in the coup attempt are detained in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

"We live inside the camp and yet we are not secure. Our house can be seen from the road and yet this break -in happened at noon and no one saw anything," Aquino said in Filipino.

"I think it was the same people who broke into our home again," Aquino said.

She said she had reported the latest incident to the military police who mounted an investigation. The two break-ins were being investigated by the police as well.

"For me, it's harassment... it's like our family is being terrorized," Aquino said. She said she believed the family was being harassed because up to now the military had no evidence that it could use against her husband.

"I hope they stop this. My husband is already in detention. What more do they want from us?" she said.

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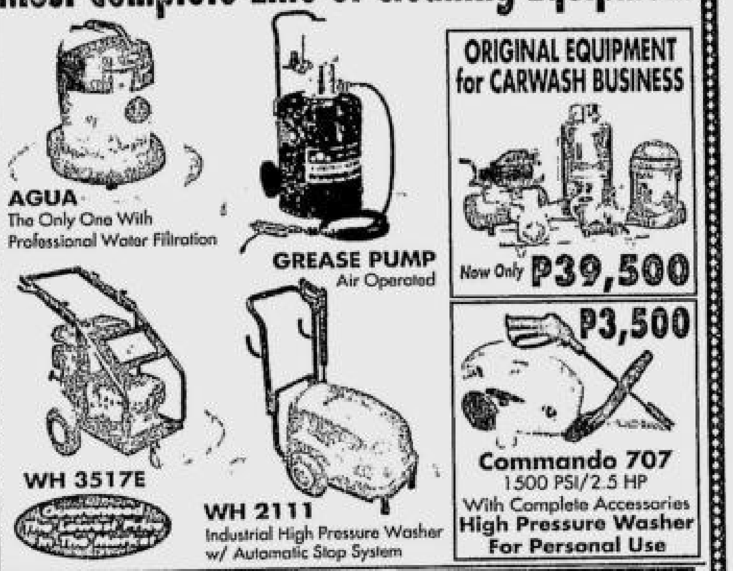

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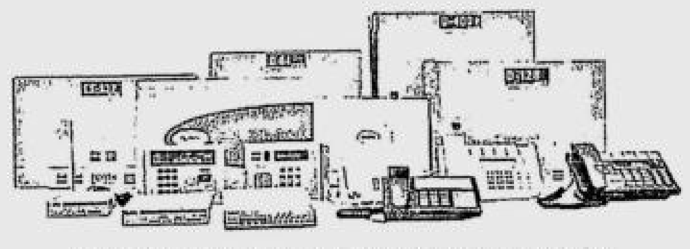

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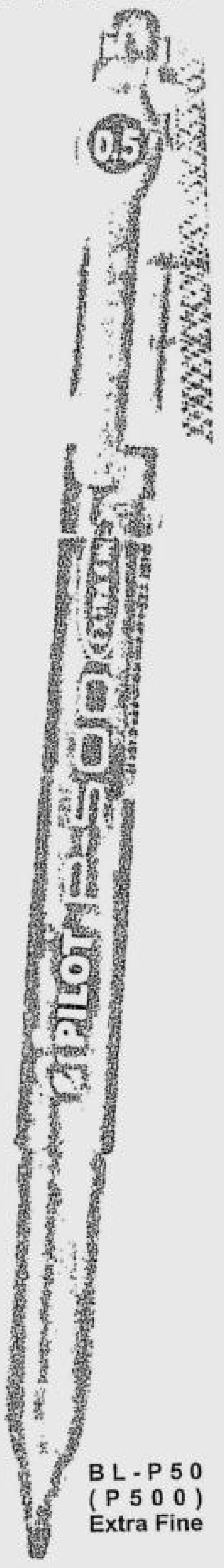

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Vilma asks for one week

From page A1

think and pray as a leader," she said, eliciting cheers from the crowd gathered outside the Lipa City Hall before the flag ceremony.

She later told some reporters that she might announce her decision earlier, maybe in two or three days.

With a voting population of at least 1.3 million, Batangas is one of the bigger political battlegrounds in next May's national and local elections.

Some senior Malacañang officials indicated they would support Santos, wife of administration-backed reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, if she decided to make a go for the gubernatorial post.

LIPA City Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto is shown a copy of the INQUIRER by Batangas Rep. Eileen Ermita-Buhain during the flag ceremony in front of the Lipa City Hall. Behind Recto is Edwin Ermita, a bank executive, who is reportedly running for vice governor. EDWIN BACASMAS

'I'm waiting for a sign'

This could set up a family clash. Santos is a sister-in-law of incumbent Batangas Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, who has also announced his gubernatorial plans.

Both are trying to unseat Gov. Armando Sanchez, a member of the Atienza wing of the Liberal Party, which is allied with President Macapagal-Arroyo's ruling coalition.

"I'm not dilly-dallying. I am just waiting for a sign. Is it a go?" Santos told the INQUIRER after the rally. "I just want a confirmation that I'm making the right decision. I'm seeking guidance."

When she saw the crowd yesterday, Santos said she couldn't help but feel overwhelmed.

"Now it's the people who have spoken. It was an emotional moment," Santos said. "It really made me stop and think: If all these people took the risk for me, I should also take the risk for them. They have a lot to lose, if I quit [the gubernatorial race]. I'm grateful to all of them."

This is war

Santos said she knew what she would be getting into if she decided to run for governor.

"I know that this will be a big fight. *Giyera ang papasukan namin* (This is a war we are getting into)," she said.

Festooned with placards and streamers, the City Hall grounds began filling with people as early as 6 a.m. They later turned the event into a virtual proclamation rally for her.

Santos admitted that she had been having a hard time deciding on her political career after being faced with the possibility of being pitted against her brother-in-law.

But she strongly hinted that she would accede to the calls of her supporters for her to run.

In tears

Apparently touched by the welcome she received, Santos was in tears as she shook hands with her supporters, who had waited for her for almost two hours.

At one point, she almost fell from the stage as her followers surged forward to greet her after the 8 a.m. flag-raising ceremony.

Dressed in a bright red jacket over a white lace blouse, Santos thanked those who came to the ceremony.

"In my 21 years as a politician, this is the first time I saw the people of Batangas earnestly asking a politician to run for a position," said a retired town mayor.

Santos told the crowd that she was hurt by the controversy triggered by speculation on whether she would run for governor or not.

She said that to lessen her emotional burden, she wrote down all her feelings.

Recto brothers

"I kept writing down all the questions inside me so that I could get them off my chest," she said in Filipino. "How I wish he (Ricky) was a different person. But it just so happens that he's the brother of my husband," she said, her voice cracking.

Ricky, who jumped from the ruling Lakas-CMD party to join the Genuine Opposition, slammed his younger brother, Ralph, after he mentioned in a Team Unity rally three weeks ago that his wife would be the next Batangas governor.

Breakfast with Arguelles

Ralph, in retaliation, said his elder brother would have no chance of beating Sanchez.

Santos told the INQUIRER how the crowd had affected her, apparently in a way that could affect her decision.

"They assured me: 'We understand your dilemma. That you want to protect your family. But we are also your family.' *Tinamaan ako doon.* [It hit home.]"

Yesterday, she also had a one-on-one breakfast meeting with Archbishop Ramon Arguelles, who has been very vocal in his support for her.

Talking of her weeklong seclusion before yesterday's rally, Santos told the INQUIRER: "I stayed in the house. I worked out on the treadmill. I wrote in my journal. I poured out all my heartaches in my diary. I reflected on what had been happening in the past few weeks."

When she re-read the journal, "It made me realize: Good thing, I didn't say those things in public. I was upset that time. I was full of anger. I felt down. Until this rally happened."

A Santos supporter, Ibaan Mayor Artemio Chua, claimed at least 19 of Batangas' 34 mayors had signed a manifesto of support for the Lipa mayor.

Praying for guidance

Senator Recto said his wife was praying for divine guidance before making a decision.

"It's time to give Vi the peace and the quiet that she needs for her to arrive at a decision all of Batangas is waiting for her to make," Recto said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said recently that his son, Edwin, vice president of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., planned to run for vice governor "if Vilma pushes through (with her candidacy) ... and if he will be considered by Vilma as her running mate."

Ermita's daughter, Eileen Buhain, is the representative of the first district of Batangas.

Ermita said Lakas would support Santos' gubernatorial candidacy since she is the Lakas chair for Lipa. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Michael Lim Ubac*

Sanchez, 14 Batangas mayors may join Kampi

BATANGAS CITY—BATANGAS GOV. ARMANDO Sanchez has all but decided to join President Macapagal-Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi) party, an official said yesterday.

Provincial administrator Ronaldo Geron said Sanchez, a member of the Liberal Party, will take his oath as a Kampi member possibly together with at least 14 Batangas mayors and other local officials.

He said the issue of the LP leadership, which is being contested by Sen. Franklin Drilon and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, was the primary consideration behind Sanchez's planned party switch.

The Supreme Court is expected to issue its ruling, possibly today, on the LP leadership issue.

Any ruling could create a problem regarding party endorsement of the candidate for governor, Geron said.

"Even if the (court) comes out with a decision, it's still a subject of a motion for reconsideration," he said. "Who will sign the certificate of nomination?"

"We will still be talking with Team Unity officials tomorrow (Tuesday) and if the LP problem doesn't get resolved, maybe those things may happen," he said.

"He's almost decided," Geron said of Sanchez.

Geron belittled yesterday's rally by supporters of Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos who urged her to run for governor.

He said most of Santos' supporters were former mayors and only nine of the 34 Batangas mayors showed up at the rally.

Sanchez himself said he was not at all affected by Santos' impending candidacy.

"I cannot choose who I will run against," he said, adding that his chances of winning would not diminish regardless of who ran against him. *Marlon Ramos and Marlon Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Ruling parties headed for a collision in 2010

From page A1

the senatorial elections" as Kampi has no standard-bearer in the administration-backed 12-member Team Unity slate.

However, Singson admitted that the seeds for a showdown in 2010 were being planted in the local government and congressional levels. There a full-blown fight between Lakas and Kampi is a foregone conclusion.

Over the past few weeks, the dominant Lakas party, led by former President Fidel V. Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia, has been parrying the poaching forays of Kampi to boost the membership of the President's key party.

The President has ordered her coalition, which includes Lakas and Kampi, to strictly adhere to the equity of the incumbent in resolving disputes between members running for local and congressional seats.

But her order has largely been seen as paying lip service in some hotly disputed areas like Pampanga, where the incumbent Lapid clan's main rival will be the Pinedas of Kampi.

A top Lakas official, who requested anonymity, said that Kampi's goal in the elections was to vote in as many of its members in local government and congressional seats to offer a stiff challenge to Lakas for dominance over the next three years.

Kampi after De Venecia post

"I don't think Kampi will rest until it has taken the speakership from De Venecia. We expect the next three years to be very rocky," said the Lakas official.

The same official noted that the brains behind Kampi wanted to follow the same path taken by Ramos, who has remained an influential force in national politics even after the end of his term in 1998 because his party, Lakas, retained its dominance.

But a Kampi source, who refused to identified, said that while the fight for dominance between Lakas and Kampi was plausible, it was not inevitable.

"Kampi would have served its purpose if the President is not impeached in the next three years," said the source. "But if Kampi will be in a position to be a key player in the post-Arroyo scenario, then it will make a move."

Former Sen. Heherson Alvarez said Kampi's aggressive moves were expected for an emerging party. "It's positioning [itself] for future electoral combat," said Alvarez.

Alvarez explained that any party—whether in coalition with the party in power or the dominant opposition party—"always wants to capture whenever possible national prominence and the national leadership, and Kampi is moving toward that."

Preparing for combat

"In the next political combat, they should have established sufficient numbers of bases already in order to qualify putting up national candidates even in the turfs of allies like us," he said.

Alvarez said that although Kampi had been putting up candidates in areas that had established Lakas candidates, "this can be resolved because it's an off-presidential year election."

Lakas executive director Ray Roquero and presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio made the same optimistic assessment in separate interviews.

"The raiding of Lakas members has already stopped, after President Arroyo told party mates that all allies will be treated equally, regardless of party affiliation," said Roquero.

Alvarez said that the quarrel in the local level of allies of the President was "very strange."

"They're together on certain national issues, but divided in the local level. How could you have different positions for a single political issue? That's the oddity of our political system (but) we rationalize it," said Alvarez.

Contest of personalities

To the question of why the electorate allowed this setup, he said politicians had not really gone into the politics of defining platforms and issues.

"The politics of the barangay is still on us. It's a contest of personalities. And in the national scene it's a contest of popularity," said Alvarez, pointing to the 1998 contest between actor-turned-politician Joseph Estrada, who was extremely popular, and De Venecia, who was politically savvy.

"There's a lot of room for personality politics," he admitted, but he said there was still hope because "more and more, the new generation is asking for a politics of platform."

Whether this is going to happen three years from now remains to be seen, but what's clear from what's developing now is a looming confrontation between Lakas and Kampi.

Lakas, Kampi rocket launchers for FVR, GMA

From page A1

Saycon, who was among the nonpoliticians involved in the founding of the two parties.

"These parties grew from advocacy, but they ended up *trapo* at the end of the day because traditional forces in politics who know how to maneuver better than anyone else had taken over," Saycon said in a telephone interview.

The president of Lakas, Speaker Jose de Venecia, and the president of Kampi, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, had both served in the Marcos dictatorship.

Gabriel Claudio, Ms Arroyo's political adviser and Lakas secretary general, was also an executive assistant to Puno who was then undersecretary to Jose Roño, Marcos' minister of local government and one of the leaders of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL).

Straddling Lakas and Kampi is President Macapagal-Arroyo herself, for whom Kampi was founded in 1996, ostensibly for her presidential bid in 1998. Instead, in 1998, Ms Arroyo joined Lakas as the running mate of De Venecia, then the Lakas-NUCD presidential candidate. Ms Arroyo won overwhelmingly, but De Venecia lost.

Lakas, on the other hand, was formed as a vehicle for Ramos' entry into politics after he lost the nomination of the then dominant party Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) in December 1991.

Lakas founders

Among the Lakas founders were politicians, mostly from the pro-Marcos KBL, such as former Batasan members Edelmiro Amante and Gualberto Lumauig, former Immigration Commissioner Leandro Verceles Sr., military generals, businessmen and socialite Rose Marie "Baby" Arenas.

Anointed by President Corazon Aquino, Ramos won the elections in May 1992, effectively turning Lakas and its coalition partner, the National Union of Christian Democrats (NUCD) (later renamed Christian Muslim Democrats), as the administration party in the 1998 elections.

But with Ms Arroyo in Malacañang, Lumauig said the configuration had changed, with Ramos and Lakas effectively eased out of the scene by Kampi members.

"Look at how Kampi is treating Lakas in Tagaytay," Lumauig said.

Lumauig was referring to the row between Mayor Abraham Tolentino, formerly with Lakas but now with Kampi, and Councilor Jocelyn Ricardo, a Lakas member backed by Ramos to challenge Tolentino in the mayoralty race.

Tolentino has publicly questioned Ramos' endorsement of Ricardo, creating a situation described by Ms Arroyo's political adviser Claudio as a "tricky situation."

Rise of Kampi

The rise of Kampi only happened after Ms Arroyo became president in January 2001. Before that, Kampi—Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino—had been reduced to a fund-raising club led by her husband, lawyer Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Registered with the Comelec as a political party on Jan. 31, 1997, Kampi was an offshoot of meetings Ms Arroyo, then a senator, had called initially among friends at her parents' house in Forbes Park. The first formal meeting was held at the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati sometime before her birthday in April 1996.

According to Saycon, the meeting was held "at the instance of Ms Arroyo who said she wanted to pursue greater challenges." At the meeting were Philippine Star columnist Teodoro Benigno, businessmen Dave Barcenas, Amaury Gutierrez and Rey Hidalgo and Ms Arroyo's brother Diosdado "Buboy" Macapagal Jr.

A series of meetings would follow. Then Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, his wife Margarita, Billy Esposo, Dante Ang, Vic Sumulong, Luis Santos and others would join them.

When it was registered with the Commission on Elections in January 1997, Kampi listed Ms Arroyo as its party president, with Margarita "Ting-ting" Cojuangco, Amado Bagatsing and Luis Santos as vice presidents. Emigdio Tanjuatco Jr. was listed as secretary general.

Kampi founders

Among the party's founding members were Ms Arroyo, her husband Mike, her brother Buboy, her brother-in-law Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo and some 20 others who included Herminio Aquino, Vic Sumulong, Mario Espinosa, Anacleto Badoy Jr., Jaime Zapanta, Jose Vazquez, Wencelito Andanar and Saycon himself.

Neither Puno, who is Kampi's current president-on-leave, nor Rep. Luis Villafuerte, who is Kampi's working president, were there in Kampi's founding and formative years, Saycon pointed out.

Saycon said Kampi's first goal then was to propel Ms Arroyo to the presidency, after it was made clear to them that Edgardo Angara, and not Ms Arroyo, would be the LDP's standard-bearer in the 1998 presidential race.

But the Angara-Arroyo showdown never took place. Instead, Angara went on to be the running mate of Joseph Estrada under the PMP banner, while Arroyo became the running mate of De Venecia in the Lakas-NUCD party.

Candidates can use cell phones to campaign

From page A1

munications Commission (NTC) said yesterday that in the absence of regulations from the Commission on Elections (Comelec), it had no choice but to allow text campaigning using cell phones.

"The Comelec has yet to issue guidelines on whether text campaigning is allowed or not," NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento told the INQUIRER—in a text message.

The NTC has asked the Comelec for such guidelines due to queries from telecommunication companies.

1 million text messages

Smart Communications Inc. legal chief Rogelio V. Quevedo was recently reported as saying that his company had been receiving queries from politicians on how to send campaign jingles and other downloadable content.

Smart and Piltel, both subsidiaries of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., handle a total of 800 million text messages a day, PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno said.

Globe Telecom Inc., for its part, handles 250 million text messages daily, said Froilan Castelo, head of regulatory affairs.

In all, there are an estimated 43 million cell phone users in the country.

Anti-spam rules

Without Comelec rules, the NTC said the only way it could regulate text campaigns is by enforcing anti-spam rules.

"What we're saying is that there is a memorandum circular on anti-spam and that may be cited as [a] guide to text campaigns," Sarmiento said.

"Comelec has not yet responded to our letter (seeking advice). But telcos need to comply with existing regulations of NTC," according to NTC spokesperson Lucio Espinoza.

Night ban

Espinoza said telcos should advise politicians that under anti-spam rules, subscribers needed to give their consent before being sent campaign materials through their cell phones.

"There is a provision that telcos should first ask their subscribers ... If (the request) is rejected, they cannot continue," Espinoza said.

Apart from getting the consumers' consent, Espinoza said the NTC would also ban the sending of text messages from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. under anti-spam rules.

Bittersweet news: 'Ampalaya' is back

From page A1

But in the meantime, the recognition only applies to its leaves.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has issued a circular reinstating the ampalaya as a "scientifically validated herbal medicinal plant" because of "recent evidence on the efficacy of ampalaya against diabetes mellitus."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

HEALTH Secretary Francisco Duque (2nd from left) announces that the "ampalaya" is back on the list of scientifically recognized medicinal plants. Also in photo are Lito Abelarde of the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines and Melody. Samudio of the Bureau of the Food and Drugs (4th from left and right, respectively).

The recognition should be enough to encourage growers of the vegetable, Duque said yesterday at a press conference.

This early, five companies producing ampalaya-based food supplements have expressed interest in manufacturing pills made from ampalaya leaves.

It will be the first ampalaya-based pill for type 2 diabetes to be locally produced and sold in the market, said Cirilo Galindez, acting director general of the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC).

In type 2 diabetes, the most prevalent strain, the body does not produce enough insulin, or it ignores the insulin produced.

Ten medicinal plants

Ampalaya was on the list of 10 recognized medicinal plants, called "Sampung Halamang Gamot," drafted in 1995 during the term of Health Secretary Hilarion Ramiro.

Pills were made from five of the 10 recognized medicinal plants: *lagundi, sambong, tsaang gubat, akapulko* and *yerba buena*, according to PITAHC.

Also on the list are *bayabas* (guava), *bawang* (garlic), *ulasimang bato* and *niyug-niyogan*.

The list was promoted all over the country and was included in the curriculum of medical schools.

But in 2003, as ampalaya-based food supplements grew popular, former Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit reclassified the ampalaya as "folkloric."

Pharmaceutical industry

The reclassification came amid a strong lobby by the pharmaceutical industry against ampalaya supplements, which had reportedly eaten into the sales of the industry's expensive drugs against diabetes.

"Perhaps during that time there were no clear bases to consider the ampalaya a medicinal plant, except for some anecdotal reports," Duque said.

Last year, Nelia Maramba, chair of the National Integrated Research Project (NIRP) on Medicinal Plants, completed a study showing that ampalaya leaves were comparable to synthetic drugs for diabetes, according to Galindez.

That was the study that convinced the Department of Health to give back to the ampalaya—or at least its leaves—what it had lost, he said.

Galindez pointed out that the Maramba study only covered leaves of the Makiling variety and not the vegetable itself.

Preventive

Duque encouraged people, especially those at risk, like those who had relatives suffering from diabetes, or were overweight, to include ampalaya in their diet for its nutritional benefits.

"Including *amplaya* in our diet will be a preventive measure for the possible occurrence of increasing bad sugar," the health secretary said.

This should not give "false hopes" to patients, however.

The ampalaya-based tablets, once they are out in the market, should be taken according to a doctor's prescription, officials said.

Lito Abelarde, chair of the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines, expects the ampalaya-based tablet to be out in the market within the year.

Abelarde said the group was ready to start manufacturing the tablets as soon as permits were granted to its members.

Curriculum

Duque said the Department of Education should include in the medical curriculum the reclassified status of ampalaya.

Former Health Secretary Jaime Galvez Tan said the study on ampalaya leaves took a decade and P20 million to complete.

It will take perhaps almost the same period and amount of money to confirm the therapeutic properties of the vegetable itself, he said.

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Militarized

EDITORIAL

IT LOOKS LIKE THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION, with the help of the military, will stop at nothing to eliminate legal militant organizations from the political landscape. Since the start of the Arroyo presidency in 2001, hundreds of activists and militants have been killed and the military or their minions are the prime suspects in these killings. Now, dozens of poor areas in Metro Manila are being militarized.

The militarization actually started last November or December, according to the accounts of some of the affected barangays, particularly Barangay Commonwealth in Quezon City. Army soldiers were seen prowling the streets day and night, striking fear in the hearts of residents. Several residents said the soldiers were asking about members of militant party-list groups. At one time, they urged the residents not to vote for certain party-list groups in the May elections.

Barangay Commonwealth is a prime target of the military because it is where detained Rep. Crispin Beltran, a member of the Anakpawis party list, has his house. It also has one of the biggest concentrations of members of Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anakpawis, Kadamay, Migrante and Anakbayan in Metro Manila.

The administration and the military, which have always been antagonistic to militant groups, must have been alarmed by the finding of a recent Pulse Asia poll that three militant groups—Bayan Muna, Akbayan and Gabriela—are the top three party-list groups preferred by voter. These three are among the organizations most critical of the Arroyo administration.

Alberto Corbes, a Bayan Muna member, said a soldier stopped him to ask why he was carrying Bayan Muna application forms. The soldier asked him if he didn't know that Bayan Muna "is a front for the New People's Army." The soldier warned him that he "won't live long enough to see Holy Week."

Strangely, when the militarization of 27 barangays in Metro Manila was brought to the attention of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, he ordered Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon to conduct an investigation. Charges have been brought against the military, and yet it is the military that is being asked to investigate itself.

The militarization of 27 barangays in vote-rich Manila, Quezon City and Caloocan City could soon lead to the operation of "death squads" that have up to now been operating in the provinces. The military have imposed a de facto martial law and brought about an atmosphere of terror in these areas during the election period.

Recently, the Comelec and the AFP signed a memorandum of agreement that would keep the military from engaging in partisan politics and remove from it election-related duties. The assignment of soldiers to the 27 poor barangays in Metro Manila is a violation of that agreement. Even if there is a peace and order problem in these areas, as the military claims, it is not for soldiers to attend to the problem.

The soldiers are reported to be campaigning in these areas. Gloria Rodriguez, a member of Karapatan, said the soldiers urged residents not to vote for certain party-list groups, saying that those groups would be their ruin. Will the military use other measures on election day to ensure the defeat of these groups?

It seems that the militarization of the 27 poor barangays in Metro Manila is being used as a test case. If it works there, then it will be done also in other parts of the country where the administration candidates are weak. It will be pursued to make sure that the candidates of militant party-list groups lose in the coming elections.

It is beginning to look like 2004 all over again, when generals and other ranking officers were said to have conspired with some Comelec officials to rig the vote in favor of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Now, the expected beneficiaries are the administration's candidates for the Senate and the House, to ensure that the opposition would not obtain the number necessary to initiate and conduct impeachment proceedings.

The militarization of the barangays has to stop immediately. The soldiers have no business being in the barangays—unless there is a war or rebellion going on, or unless martial law has been declared. And it should be the Comelec and the Commission on Human Rights that should conduct the investigation, and not the AFP, some of whose soldiers have been illegally assigned to the affected areas.

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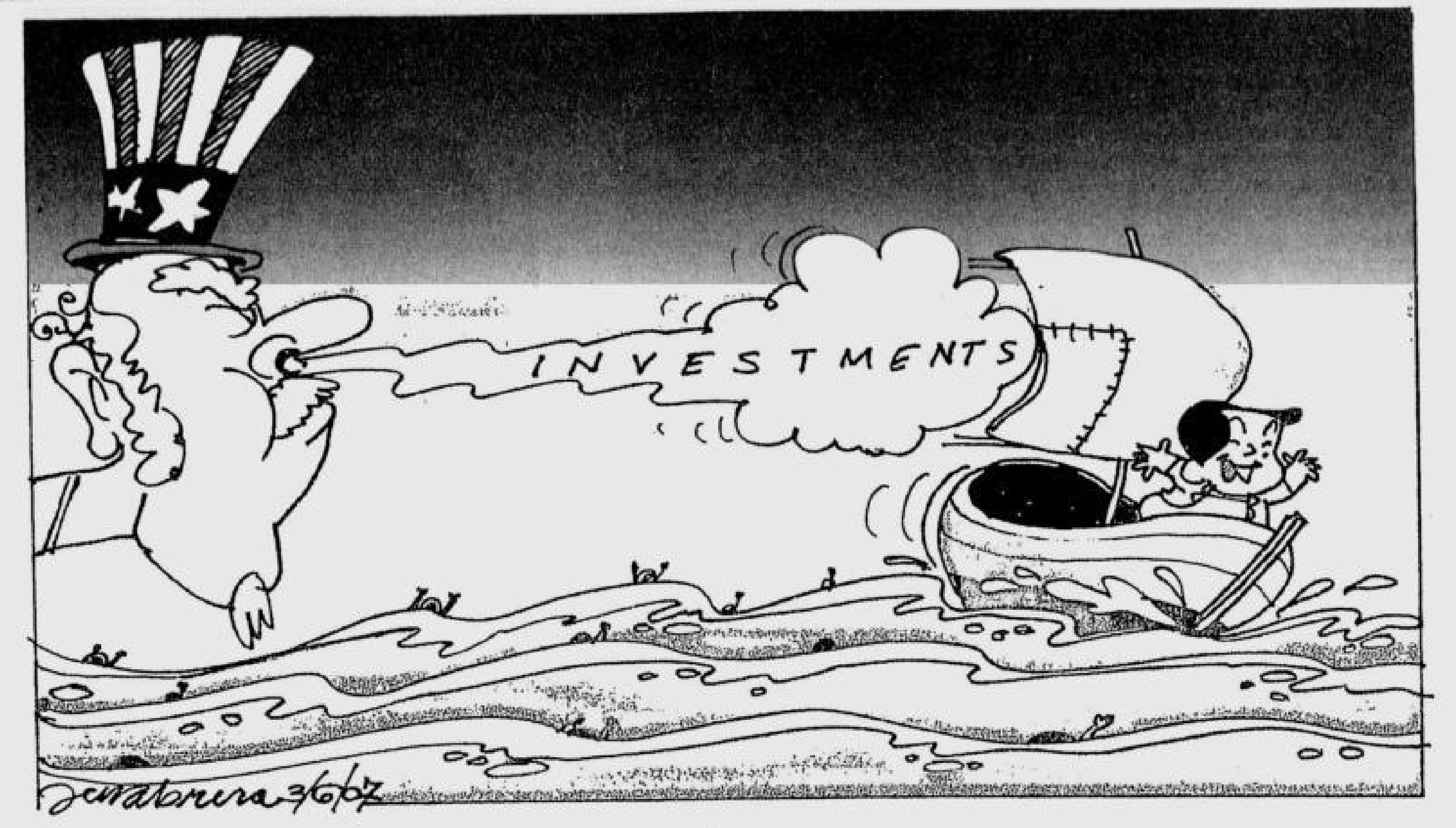


Dirt fatigue

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ELECTION DAY IS TWO MONTHS AWAY, BUT people already have it up to here with "dirt fatigue." Every day, shadowy overpaid spinmeisters barge, uninvited, into our homes through shrill press statements, smear jingles and idiotic ads.

"Scandals are not like bread," an African proverb says. "There's never a shortage."

The opposition's "aso" (lapdog) jingle smeared candidates Tito Sotto, Tessie Aquino Oreta and Edgardo Angara. Sotto's Senate record is zilch. And Aquino-Oreta hasn't exorcised images of her salsa after the derailment of Joseph Estrada's impeachment. Now, a beet-red opposition admits that rogue partisans of the late Fernando Poe Jr. peddled the phony story saying Erap had morphed from a refrigerated movie-actor to jingle composer.

Rep. Peter Cayetano's jingle skewers the unpopular First Gentleman for outbursts during House hearings. But his charges that Arroyo maintained numbered bank accounts proved bogus. Smarting from a reprimand by the House ethics committee, Cayetano fumed: "When I get to the Senate, and get my hands on a committee, he'll have people like me to deal with."

Is a Senate committee then a political *batuta*(bludgeon)? Senators Jose Diokno and Emmanuel Pelaez never stooped to such grossness. But this level of venom stains election discourse today.

Spokesmen Ramon "Ace" Durano of the administration and the opposition's Adel Tamano seek civilized debate. But they can't leash muckrakers swirling around their flanks.

"Voters (are) desperate to go beyond the shallowness of TV ads and the one-dimensionality of posters," the INQUIRER noted in an editorial. In this wasteland, "even a limited debate" between senatorial candidates would be "useful." And business groups are setting up a debate for March 14, although its venue remains a prickly issue.

Will the choice, meanwhile, "remain between silence or scandal," as French writer Andre Maurois asked? The inside pages of newspapers carry issues that outrank jingles. Here are two samples:

Rice post-harvest losses—from shoddy milling, decrepit storage to pests—come up to 4.9 million metric tons. That waste could feed Metro Manila's population, with two regions tossed in, for a year, Sen. Ralph Recto said. The National Food Authority spends P28 billion for rice imports from Thailand and Vietnam. There's silence on what's being done, if any, to stanch this drain.

"*Ang hindi magtatapon, ay hindi mangangailangan* (He who does not waste will not want)," the Pilipino axiom cautions. Yet, we lose after harvest 13 percent of corn, almost 35 percent of fruits and over 40 percent of vegetables. This loss locks malnourished kids and penury-strapped families into even more misery.

Whittling post-harvest losses would feed people without plowing additional land now running short. Simple village technology, like harnessing evaporation of water, stored 20,000 ears of sweet corn. "A Filipino consultant transferred the technology to Gambia (in Africa) with even greater success than (here)," notes Susana Castro of the University of the Philippines Los Baños. But then when were prophets ever lionized in their hometowns?

The Agricultural Modernization Law (RA 8435) allocated P24 billion for post-harvest programs between 1999 to 2006. An infusion of P444.37 million went for trading posts, village processing equipment, warehouses and cold storage to cut losses in high value crops, like vegetables and cut flowers. Did we get enough bang for the buck?

There's evidence of a strong surge in post-harvest work by industry, state colleges and universities. Much research on methods and tools have accumulated. Technologies, which cut losses during non-refrigerated transport of produce from Mindanao to Manila and vice-versa, have gotten attention.

How well have they been used in the field? Post-harvest handling systems for mango and "solo" papaya from Balingasag, Misamis Oriental, for export, are paying off. But available technologies have largely been cornered by traders and processors. And poverty shuts out most farmers.

The second news report dealt with heavy metal pollution in the Davao region. Nationwide, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources tally shows that 180 of the country's 421 rivers and other bodies of water are seriously contaminated. Fifty are "biologically dead"—they're so contaminated that they snuff out life.

Rivers form this planet's circulatory system, the Worldwatch Institute notes. "They form the critical link between land and sea. When such an ecosystem is destroyed, the planet becomes impoverished at all levels—genes, species, linkages, processes…."

Rivers die because people use them as latrines. Farms and factories funnel their chemical sludge into them. And surrounding forests are razed, triggering soil erosion and sedimentation.

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions." And there's a glut of well-meaning laws for rivers: the Water Code, the Public Land Act, the Forestry Code down to DENR Administrative Order 97-23 and the toothless Presidential Decree 1160, which authorizes barangay officials to arrest violators but provides no penalties. There is, however, patchy implementation.

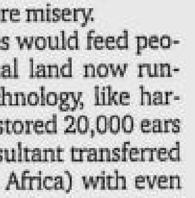
As the deterioration of rivers and lakes continue, so does the food system. "You can't eat money" when ecosystems collapse. And banging away at jingles is an exercise in futility.

As Herodotus wrote, "No man steps into the same river twice."

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

What's in a place?

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

WHAT, PARAPHRASING SHAKESPEARE, IS IN a place?

Everything.

I'm glad that the opposition has refused to debate with the administration in Manila Hotel but has demanded they do so instead at Plaza Miranda. It's the most inspired thing they've done in a long time. No, it's the only sane thing they've done in a long time.

Places have symbolic meanings or mythical resonances. I've always held that during Edsa 2 if the protesters had gathered at Plaza Miranda or Mendiola Bridge, as many of them wanted, instead of the Edsa Shrine, the event would have had whole new meanings or interpretations. It would not be called "Edsa 2" to begin with. It was part of Jaime Cardinal Sin's perspicacity, or shrewdness, that he called for the irate crowds that had spontaneously taken to the streets after the Senate-cum-impeachment court refused to open the "second envelope" to gather at the Edsa Shrine like streams into the sea. In one fell swoop, he stamped his seal on a movement that was not of his making. Henceforth the massing of Filipinos that ousted Erap would pass on to history, or myth or legend (the three are indistinguishable in this country) as "Edsa 2." And like anything stamped with "Edsa," a thing attributable to God and Church, grace and Sin.

You want further proof of the awesome symbolic power unleashed by particular places, just look at Bishop Socrates Villegas' vituperations against the Erap hordes, or the barefoot *masa*, massing at the Shrine in their own version of "Edsa 3." He railed at it as a sacrilege, a blasphemy and a profanity combined, and succeeded only in making himself look bad. But that's another story.

It's for that reason I applaud the opposition's insistence that the debate being sponsored by business groups take place at Plaza Miranda rather than the Manila Hotel. At the very least, look at the idiotic premise for that debate as articulated by the president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce, Francis Chua: "Our main concern is to prevent a repeat of the last three years where Congress was distracted from its main duty of legislation by numerous investigations. We want to see who among the candidates are serious in pushing for the national interest when they are voted into office."

Chief of the "numerous investigations" Congress conducted, of course, or at least Congress was forced to conduct in light of several congressmen pushing for it, was whether or not this country had the right president. That was so following the unraveling of the "Hello Garci" tape, which had Alan Peter Cayetano, Chiz Escudero and other young and not-so-Young Turks calling for GMA's impeachment. Now, what is Chua saying, determining whether the ruler of this country acquired power by the vote or merely seized it is a distraction unworthy of people who like to think they partake of the wisdom of the legendary Greek legislator Solon? What is Chua saying, unearthing the truth and restoring justice and decency to this country are an impediment to legislation?

In fact, Chua mistakes his and his friends' business interests for the national one. If that is his and his friends' premise, why hold a debate at all, in Manila Hotel or elsewhere? If it is all right for the "serious" candidates to merely steal the vote and rule illegitimately so long as they make business happy, why in fact hold elections at all?

The opposition's choice of Plaza Miranda is inspired because Plaza Miranda is the most forceful reminder to this country of what law is. Take it from what the senators and congressmen themselves used to say before martial law: There is no law that cannot be defended in Plaza Miranda.

What is a law if it is not transparent, if it cannot be explained to the people, and if it does not touch the lives of the people? Any two-bit congressman can compile a huge volume of the bills he has filed, the way any two-bit applicant for a job can compile a huge volume of his CV. Any two-bit president, or less than that if she has no mandate, can trumpet momentous economic accomplishments, and have allies echo them. Not everyone can defend it at Plaza Miranda. You're fake, Plaza Miranda will find you out.

That brings me to the even more important point about why the opposition's choice of Plaza Miranda is inspired. That is the economic accomplishment being touted by this administration, and which Chua is also obviously preaching. The subtext of the proposed debate in Manila Hotel is this: GMA has been good to us businessmen. The peso and the economy generally have gotten stronger, or at least have not dived the way analysts predicted they would last year. Now please explain to us, members of the opposition, why we would like to change this and vote for you.

A debate at Plaza Miranda brings back the perspective, a most important one in any society pretending to be a democracy, that government does not exist for the businessmen, it exists for the people. Government does not exist for the rich, it exists for the poor. Government does not exist for the few, it exists for the many.

A debate at Plaza Miranda, unlike one in Manila Hotel, says: We are the people, and we want to know the answers to these questions: Where is this economic growth that only the businessmen seem to be enjoying? Where is this economic growth that has most of us experiencing only joblessness, high prices, exile, lack of schools, ignorance, frustration and hopelessness? Please explain to us, members of the administration, why your boss has continuously refused to answer these questions and why we should vote for you.

What's in a place?

The difference between the many and the few. The difference between democracy and autocracy. The difference between life and death.

Can Osmeña wake up early for GO campaign?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SOME POLITICAL ANALYSTS HAVE NOTED THAT the Grand Opposition's campaign is sputtering and even "unraveling." Nothing illustrates this better than the contrast between the simultaneous campaign of GO and Team Unity in two neighboring islands in Western Visayas. GO's kick-off rally in Iloilo was called off, allegedly due to "security reasons" after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez supposedly frightened the organizers with some phone calls, but reports said the real reason was they drew only a hundred people.

The handful of GO candidates went to Capiz, where they were assisted by the Roxas family and then proceeded to Aklan with the idea of having a motorcade all the way to San Jose, Antique. But they learned that Arturo Pacificador, who was implicated in the murder of Antique's charismatic leader, Evelio Javier 21 years ago, was going to meet them in Aklan. He had proclaimed himself candidate for governor of Antique, allegedly with the approval of GO leader Ernesto Maceda. Reports said, however, that Sen. Franklin Drilon, president of a faction of Liberal Party, blew his top over the recruitment of Pacificador. Javier lost his life defending candidate Corazon Aquino's votes in February 1986. When Noynoy Aquino heard about this one-man welcoming committee, he said no way would he go up on the same stage as Pacificador. Most of the candidates made excuses to disappear, and not coincidentally, Antique leaders Exequiel Javier and Salvacion Perez, both staunch supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo, were not there.

* * *

By contrast, the Team Unity trio of Edgardo Angara, Michael Defensor and Vic Magsaysay, stumping in Negros Occidental, had its schedule ironed out by Gov. Joseph Maranon (who's running unopposed). He assigned a coordinator in every district and paid for a lot of the team's expenses, and the candidates ended their stump with a lunch with Eduardo Cojuangco. What this illustrates is the importance of the support of local officials, who can gather the crowds for rallies and forums and, come election time, connect the candidates to media, local leaders and financiers. This is where all the support that GMA has shown for local leaders in terms of projects and visits over the years will pay off; now they are going all-out for her candidates.

By contrast, statistics show that the opposition only controls two cities (San Juan and Makati City) and two provinces. Thus, GO's coordinators are private people who will not spend their own money for the candidates. This was the same situation in the presidential campaign of 2004. The opposition had far fewer local officials supporting it, but it hoped that FPJ's enormous popularity would substitute for an entrenched political machinery. When it did not happen, the opposition complained about cheating.

* * *

The opposition has tasked outgoing Sen. Sergio Osmeña as campaign manager in place of San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, but can the former pull a miracle? Those who have worked with him are skeptical, for he has a reputation for not waking up until 10 in the morning. Some politicians recall that former President Aquino would get quite upset at him when he ran for vice president with her handpicked candidate, Alfredo Lim, in the 1998 elections, since he would not show up at the appointed time.

The opposition is also bedeviled by the lack of a meaningful platform (other than to oust GMA) and at this point, this may be difficult to cobble together, given all the problems it faces. This explains why it seems to be trying to get out of a debate on the economy, sponsored by the business community. GO's amateurish campaign has boomeranged, with financial contributions drying up, and this could spell disaster for its candidates.

* * *

By contrast, the administration team is reaping the goodwill of GMA's projects such as the Roll-On, Roll-Off (RORO) and the construction of various ports, airports, bridges and highways. Moreover, the economy is receiving good marks from multilateral institutions as well as the foreign chambers of commerce, which seem to be her best campaigner. Three weeks into the senatorial campaign, the tide seems to have turned around for TU. Where before, the betting was 7-5 in favor of GO, or at best 6-6, now they're talking of 7-5 and even 8-4 for TU. To my mind, nothing illustrates the confidence of TU better than that picture on the front pages of reelectionists Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto gleefully white-water rafting in Cagayan de Oro.

* * *

Fely Zafra Reyes called up the Carmelite Sisters at their Gilmore convent the other day, begging them to please sing out loud and lovingly at Mass today, which is the burial of her mother and the birthday of the legendary Fr. John P. Delaney. The UP Community's Grand Old Lady, whom everyone called "Nanay Zafra," passed away at the age of 105 very early last Sunday, March 4. Told that the sisters only sing a capella because it's Lent, Fely said, "That's fine! It's purer." Asked if anyone was coming for it, she said, "No, but Nanay in Heaven will tell the angels that those singing are her daughters in Carmel, where she'd visit even on a wheelchair."

Nanay was a sister of the famous scholar-professor Encarnacion Alzona, who also lived to over 93 years, and her daughter, Sr. Lourdes Zafra of the Holy Spirit, must have pulled strings to get her mother Home. The wife of history professor and author Nicolas Zafra, she retired years ago as dean of the Far Eastern University College of Education. She was treasurer of the UP Catholic Community for many years and outlived a number of chaplains whom she took care of, and who used to call her "Nanay the Rock": Delaney, and Fr. Pacifico Ortiz and Bishop Felix Perez, and a number of assistant chaplains such as Fathers Raymond Gough, Joseph O'Brien and Cicero Cebrero. Doubtless they were all around to happily welcome her Home.

Ricky Recto's next step

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT'S TRUE, RICKY RECTO HAS BEEN VICE GOVernor of Batangas for 12 years and may, as he claims, "know the ins and outs of all the four corners" of the province. But doesn't it say something about his performance in office—and his personal qualities—that he can't quite capture the hearts and minds of his provincemates despite all these years as the second-highest provincial official?

From visits to Batangas and conversations with prominent citizens, even long before the political season went underway, it seemed clear to me that there was no way Recto would ever be elected provincial governor. Batanguenos have long been dissatisfied with their elected officials, and though they were ready to throw Gov. Armando Sanchez out of office, they appeared even more reluctant to let Recto walk into the governorship. There were many stories circulating about the vice governor, from his bullying ways to his callous treatment of women. And it seemed from what friends in Batangas were saying that his personal deficits were linked directly to his performance as a public official.

To me, the strongest indication of Recto's weakness is the indirect support rendered by Sanchez who said in a radio interview that Recto "had long wanted to be governor and he should be given the chance to make a run for it." This was said in the context of the possible candidacy of Recto's sister-in-law, Vilma Santos-Recto, the mayor of Lipa City and also a very popular and much respected actress. It was clear that Sanchez far preferred going head-to-head against the unpopular Ricky rather than risk almost certain defeat against the "Star for all Seasons."

A few days later, Vilma herself announced that she was backing out of the race for governor for the sake of maintaining family harmony.

* * *

BUT now, as this paper's banner story yesterday indicated, Batangas mayors and even the clergy are mounting a concerted effort to get Vilma to change her mind. I caught her husband, re-electionist Sen. Ralph Recto, on TV enumerating the many advantages of a Vilma candidacy. He cited surveys that showed that even if the votes for Ricky, Sanchez, and a third candidate were lumped together, the number would still not equal the number of votes Vilma would garner, if she were to run for governor.

To be sure, there are those who will vote for Vilma only because of her popularity, her name recall, her "marketability." But that isn't all she has going for her candidacy. As a mayor, she proved detractors wrong by performing above par, fulfilling campaign promises and leading the transformation of Lipa into one of the fastest growing cities in the country. She took her job seriously and sought professional advice and training. After three terms as a mayor, if she had failed to live up to her responsibilities, no amount of personal popularity could have salvaged her career in politics.

No, Ricky, not even family ties and a storied surname can save you from ignominy, given your own lackluster performance as vice governor and your many undesirable qualities. The signs seem clear and the next step is up to you.

* * *

EVEN as the Church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) has issued a "Ten Commandments" for responsible candidacy and responsible voting, it seems not everyone is trusting entirely in a benevolent God or the conscience of candidates and voters to ensure the cleanliness and orderliness of our elections. In the news is the formation by the Genuine Opposition of a "powerhouse" team of legal experts and election operatives to counter any cheating in the May 14 polls.

Although it seems that at this early stage, GO is laying the basis for a claim that their national and local candidates lost not because the people didn't vote for them but because they were cheated, the anti-cheating team still makes eminent sense and counts as admirable foresight. After all, in election after election, the postscript is always replete with stories of how one party or some candidates hijacked the results. It's not as if cheating is a constantly reinvented game. Though I must admit the variations on the classic strategies—from ballot switching to *dagdag-bawas*—are dazzling in their ingenuity.

It wasn't too long ago when we thought a vigilant citizenry was all that was needed to foil the cheaters. Thus, volunteers trooped to polling stations armed with such formidable "weapons" as flashlights, cameras, vests and self-righteousness. But their vigilance at the precincts was rewarded not with clean and credible elections but with cheating done at a higher, inaccessible level—in provincial and regional canvassing, and even, so rumors go, at the national Comelec level.

* * *

IT'S NO mystery, really, why computerized voting and ballot counting can't seem to get off the ground. Computerization would take much of the "human factor" out of the work of counting and recording the results of elections, depriving countless operatives of lucrative sidelines and windfalls, and unworthy candidates of undeserved victories.

So while the formation of a team of electoral hot-shots who can watch out for irregularities and respond immediately to incidents of attempted cheating is welcome and necessary, it should be viewed only as a stop-gap measure. Elections in this country will forever be vulnerable to manipulation and mangling until voting and counting become immunized against human interference, mainly through computerization.

Of course, it would also help if the Comelec enjoyed an unsullied reputation and credibility beyond reproach.

Education is everybody's business

COMMENTARY

Ramon del Rosario Jr. and Marilou G. Erni

WHEN THE FOUNDATION FOR WORLDWIDE People Power Inc. (FWWPPI) first briefed us at Phinma in mid-2006 about their Education Revolution project and its community-based approach to addressing the education crisis, our group, the Philippine Business for Education, reacted with great enthusiasm as we recognized then that FWWPPI had identified a key ingredient for long-term and sustainable education reform. Getting parents, local officials and local businesses to support their school's well thought-out plans and programs would most certainly help improve our ailing education system from the bottom up. After all, as we make more and more of our schools perform better with community action, more and more students will move up the system having learned and achieved more.

PBEd declared its support for the 57-75 Campaign very early because it was premised precisely on this need for school-community action. With school-community action, the campaign then intends to direct focused intervention by the business community to address retention, literacy and achievement. Existing programs will be retrofitted, new programs will be aligned and a focused program for workbooks will be pursued. In short, we will link performance with school-community action and resources will be committed toward the targeted performance.

As PBEd signs into the 57-75 Campaign partnership, we make our commitment to urge business and community leaders to continually focus their interventions for education while pursuing a long-term policy reform agenda that will help reverse the education crisis. We are pleased to work hand in hand with the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) and Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) together with the Foundation for Worldwide People Power Inc. (FWWPPI) and Synergeia Foundation as they continue to take the lead in implementing our focused projects and programs, including the workbook campaign.

We are hopeful that the government, particularly the Department of Education (DepEd), will welcome this initiative and help this effort become a government-business-civil society partnership for non-political, system-wide education reform. We are certainly more hopeful that principals, teachers, parents and local government and business leaders will all work together to help our students learn better and achieve more.

Education has been the flagship social agenda of the League of Corporate Foundations for the last few years, and we are certain that this goal is shared by many.

Through the 57-75 campaign, the LCF commits to further guide our members on developing and managing strategic interventions designed to bring about the desired results in the areas of **retention, comprehension and achievement**. Collectively, we believe that in focusing on these three areas, our long-standing dream of providing quality education for all can become a reality.

We commit to rally one and all toward mobilizing resources in exchange for results. Specifically, the LCF will initially house the 57-75 secretariat in an effort to ensure the campaign's efficient and effective implementation. Likewise, the LCF commits to continue partnering with the DepEd to fill the gaps in the area of basic education through the DepEd's Adopt-A-School facilities.

In last week's INQUIRER front page, its founding chair Eggie Duran Apostol headlined the education revolution as the new people power. In that feature, she noted the dismal quality of Philippine education, the seeming frustrations of the DepEd in dealing with this reality, and the ray of hope being offered with the 57-57 movement. She said: "Today, after five years, the People Power character of the Education Revolution has finally taken hold. The Community Participation Model (of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power) is now a cornerstone of the 57-75 Movement spearheaded by the powerful League of Corporate Foundations and the Philippine Business for Education. 57-75 seeks to make education improvement a national priority ... and likewise seeks to encourage education reform at the level of policy and bring the issue of quality education at the forefront of national consciousness."

Together, we can and we will reverse the education crisis, and give the children every possible advantage to succeed later in their lives.

Together, we shall finally succeed in making quality education for all a reality!

Marilou G. Erni is the president of the League of Corporate Foundations and the executive director of Petron Foundation, while Ramon del Rosario Jr., is the chair of the Philippine Business for Education.

At any price

YOUNG BLOOD

Carlo N. Lazaro, M.D.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I AM WRITING THIS ABOARD A PLANE. I JUST VISITED MY uncle and his family in Seattle, Washington, for a week, and I am on my way back to my father's place in New York City.

My dad graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños many years back. He immediately took a job in a big agricultural company selling fertilizers and at the same time educating farmers in Pampanga. He was a good lecturer and educator, being pro-farmer. In Pampanga, he met my mother, the daughter of a small-time fertilizer dealer. They had me a year after they were married in 1978.

My mom worked for an airline company. Even if they were both working their bottoms off and thought they only had me at the time, they felt that they still didn't have enough. We didn't have our own house and the budget was always tight.

My dad decided to work in Saudi Arabia (yes, I am an OFW child). When he was working in the Middle East, we were able to build a house and buy some property, and later we, the children, were sent to exclusive private schools.

My father was not around when my brother was born. I had such a skewed idea of family that when my brother was born in 1983, I blurted out: "*Ma, lalaki ang anak natin!*"

My dad tried to find work again in our country, but because of his age, and maybe partly because of politics, he failed to land a job. Thus, after his stint in Saudi Arabia and multiple failures in business and employment, he decided to try his luck in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

He went to the United States on a tourist visa. He had no permit to work and he carried the burden of making our lives comfortable.

Raising us was no picnic for mom. She was single-handedly taking care of two boys, and taking all the physical, emotional and psychological blows they entailed.

My dad, for all his expertise, educational background and vast experience, landed a job as a housekeeping staff in a nursing home. Later, he worked as a nurse's aide. After that, he worked as a carpool driver on the streets of New York. All the time he saved as much as he could so he could send money home to mom. And this was a man who had graduated from San Beda and UP and who had managed people in a large agricultural company.

At the age of 40, he decided that it was time to move up. He studied nursing. And when he completed his studies, he worked as a nurse—a job that he holds up to the present.

He could not go back to the Philippines because his immigration papers were not in order. So we visited him instead.

As the years passed, we started to drift apart, until we became almost like strangers. My mom loves my father, but she does not really know him well because during their 30 years of marriage, they were only together for a total of 10 years. All their married life was focused on providing a good life for us, even if it meant giving up the romance, the long walks, the "growing old together" that most couples enjoy.

I sometimes wonder why my parents gave up being together and how they were able to go through it day after day. I can imagine them just newly married and making plans to grow old together, to raise two boys together and then retire together—to start and to end together, as husband and wife.

This did not become a reality. It did not come true because of the great American dream.

The American dream is defined differently by different people. This I have learned from long conversations with my relatives. To some, it means living in the USA, building a family there, having a good career, and buying a house in a good neighborhood. To others, like my father, the American dream means working in the US, no matter what the price, to make their loved ones in the Philippines live comfortable lives.

My father is 54 now, but he looks much older than his age. Years of hard work as a nurse have taken its toll on his body. Diabetes has destroyed his joints and impaired his eyesight. He has spent several days in the intensive care unit alone. Despite all this, he continues to serve American patients and doctors.

Maybe a part of the American dream is the feeling of self-worth. When he was in his 40s, many companies in the Philippines turned his job application down because of his age. In America, his patients and co-workers love him and his age and his race hardly matter. Because he pays his taxes on time, he enjoys great benefits in terms of health care. His insurance paid for his ICU confinement as well as his laser surgeries for glaucoma. He has worked hard and Uncle Sam now takes care of him.

Ah, the American Dream: my father is weak but he is happy. His American dream came true in his accomplishments, in the property he owns in the Philippines and in his sons, one a doctor, the other a lawyer. After more than 20 years of being apart, I think he's trying to make up for lost time.

I am a new doctor in the Philippines. I am my father's son, and I, too, am searching for my American dream.

Carlo N. Lazaro, 27, passed the recent medical board exams.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Fitness test

"Our main concern is to prevent a repeat of the last three years where Congress was distracted from its main duty of legislation by numerous investigations. We want to see who among the candidates are serious in pushing for the national interest when they are voted into office."

—Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc., on hosting the debate of senatorial candidates

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Filipinos must decide on conservation issues

LET ME THANK THE INQUIRER FOR featuring the Philippines as a center of global marine biodiversity. The scale of marine biodiversity in our country is amazing. Perhaps, there is no other place on earth where biodiversity is extremely high among animals and plant groups, and it is such a small area.

Research on Philippine marine biodiversity has been going on for about 150 years. Even Manila Bay, one of our ecologically stressed bodies of water today, once had significant levels of marine biodiversity as documented by European and American scientists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Panglao Island is just one of the thousands of islands in the country with high species diversity. It is very likely that there are thousands of other "Panglaos" in the Philippines. One need not go far from Manila. The islands off Batangas have been recently identified as a major diversity center. Many of these islands are surrounded by coral reefs that have been damaged by human activities. Widespread poverty and overpopulation are the main reasons why species-diverse ecosystems such as coral reefs and rainforests have been overexploited.

It is also good to learn that the holotypes from the Panglao expedition are now deposited in the National Museum. These specimens are really priceless treasures that scientifically document our biodiversity. Filipinos need not go overseas to study and learn about the biodiversity of their country.

But in the end learning about the high diversity of our ecosystems isn't enough. We have to make conservation decisions as a nation.

—BENJAMIN VALLEJO JR., Ph.D.,
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Biogeography of the Philippines,
Biological Sciences,
202 Life Sciences Building
Lousiana State University
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Another warning for Philippine press

THE CONVICTION OF PEOPLE'S BRIGADA news publisher Leo D. Villan for libel (INQUIRER, 3/1/07) has dire implications for the working (Philippine) press. It's no less than an attempt to harass and muzzle the Philippine press, more particularly, its critical sector.

Ephraim Genuino of Pagcor gloated over his "feat" of sending to jail a Filipino journalist, whom he branded an "extortionist" even as he very well knew that his complaint of extortion against Villan was still being heard at a Pasay City court—and, therefore, still to be proven.

In fairness, Judge Silvino Pampilo of the Manila RTC Branch 26, in an interview with this newsman, clarified that he never said that Villan was convicted of extortion. The conviction, he said, was only for libel, where malice was "evidenced" by the alleged extortion try.

Yet Genuino had the gall to warn other newsmen who might want to fleece other "big shots" like him to refrain from doing so—or else they'd suffer the same fate that befell Villan.

We will expose Genuino's hollow claims and detail a new pattern being used by self-styled powers-that-be (like Genuino) to cow and destroy fearless and crusading press people.

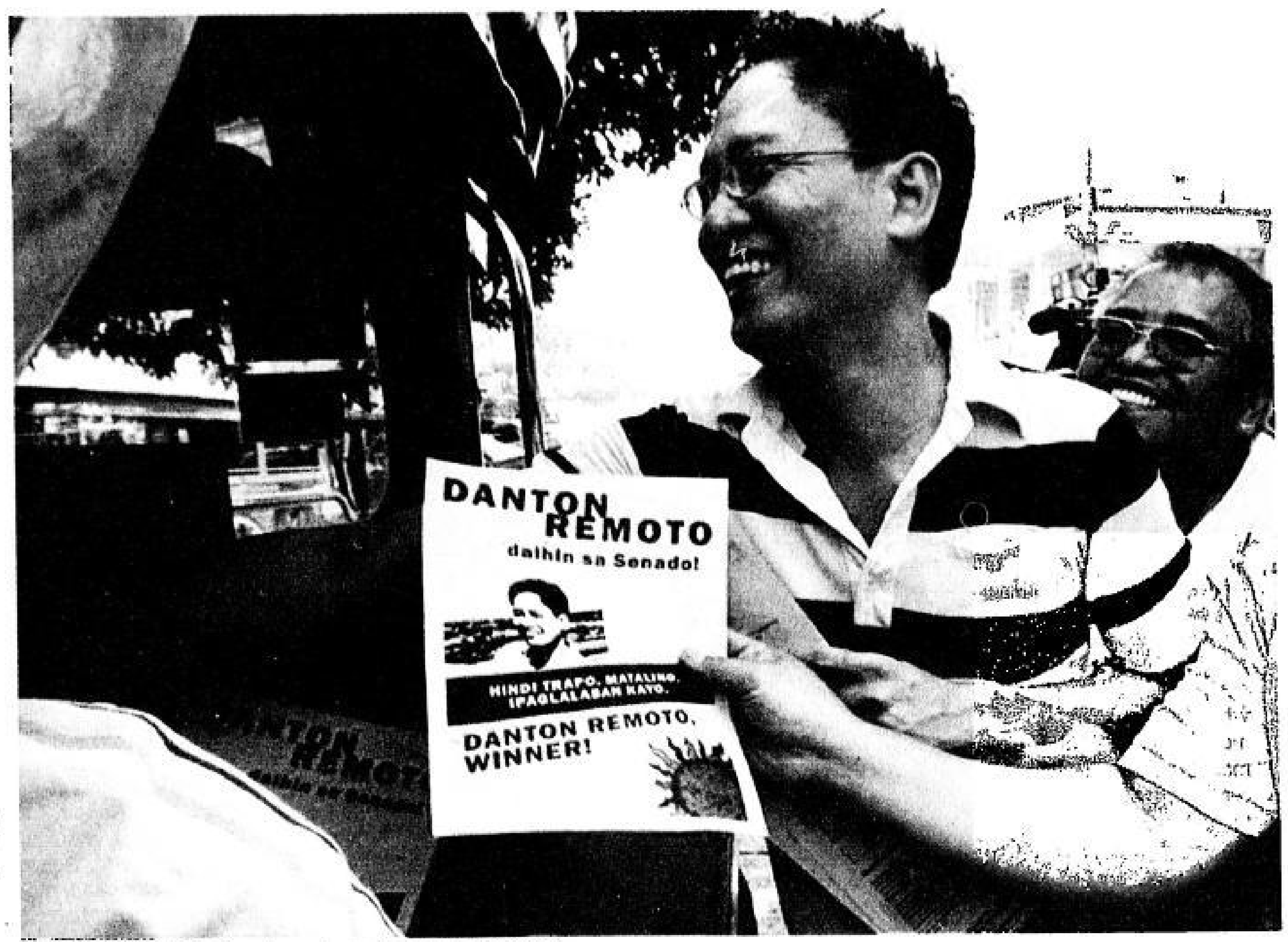
Villan and People's Brigada News ran a series of exposés against Genuino and Pagcor sometime in 2002—which thus earned for Villan the "libel cum extortion" suits from Genuino. Villan was a People's Tonite reporter for 16 years; never was an extortion case slapped against him through all those years. In fact, in one big story that he stumbled upon at Tonite, Villan was offered P2 million just to "kill" it—an offer he flatly rejected. Brigada will show how Villan was set up.

Villan's lawyer, Romeo Vicente, informed us at Brigada that whistle-blowers are protected by law, and probe agencies like the Ombudsman can act motu propio (on its own) on the basis of even unsigned exposés. "The media partakes of the nature of whistle-blowers and should therefore be also protected by law." If the press gets libel suits for all the exposés it runs, won't these deter newsmen from pursuing their calling and, conversely, inspire corrupt government functionaries and wrongdoers to further feather their nests without fear of retribution?

We at Brigada are pained to see the easy-does-it mass destruction of crusading journalists by the evil-minded—through libel suits, extrajudicial killings and other foul means. It behooves the Philippine press to close ranks and denounce this latest attack on one of the courageous defenders of press freedom.

To all newsmen: Today, it's Leo Villan. Tomorrow, it could be you.

—R. DE P. BEN BRILLANTES,
managing editor,
People's Brigada News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GAY ACTIVIST Danton Remoto on the campaign trail

Ladlad disqualification demonstrates Comelec prejudice vs gays

HOW DARE THE COMELEC RULE against Ang Ladlad for the latter's failure to prove nationwide membership? What more proof does Comelec need? Is it necessary for Ang Ladlad to submit the application forms to prove that it has members? Does everyone in the sector that Ang Ladlad wants to represent have to step forward to prove they are all over the country?

I bet that each of the Comelec commissioners has at least one relative who is gay or transgender. The Comelec ruling on Ang Ladlad reflects precisely the kind of government policies that marginalize members of the gay community. No one talks about disqualifying gays or lesbians, but these agencies always find a reason to do so. Ang Ladlad should go to Supreme Court to challenge the Comelec's ruling.

Although the move will not guarantee a reversal of the Comelec's ruling, at least it will tell us how marginalized the gays and lesbians in this country are. And that will give us another proof that that sector of society should be represented by a party list.

—LIZ MENDOZA,
lizmendoza888@yahoo.com

It's about PRC, not CGFNS

THIS IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER TItled "CGFNS should consider PRC's competence." (INQUIRER, 2/27/07)

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools does not condone any form of cheating, most especially one that is orchestrated by examiners for a very obvious reason: money.

But the controversy spawned by the leakage of test questions in the June 2006 nursing licensure exam is not about CGFNS. It is about the Professional Regulation Commission. It's time for the PRC to clean up its dirt and move on. The CGFNS only wants to keep its integrity.

—MOISES M ALIPALA III,
612 W. Aldine 2N,
Chicago IL 60657

Good intentions laudable but not enough

WE BELIEVE THE GOOD INTENTIONS behind the Government Service Insurance System's eCard Plus program, explained to us by GSIS public affairs vice president Ella Valencerina. (INQUIRER, 2/02/07) The GSIS pensioners of Ozamiz City and the neighboring municipalities, in particular, are eagerly looking forward to:

1. A Union Bank branch in Ozamiz City.

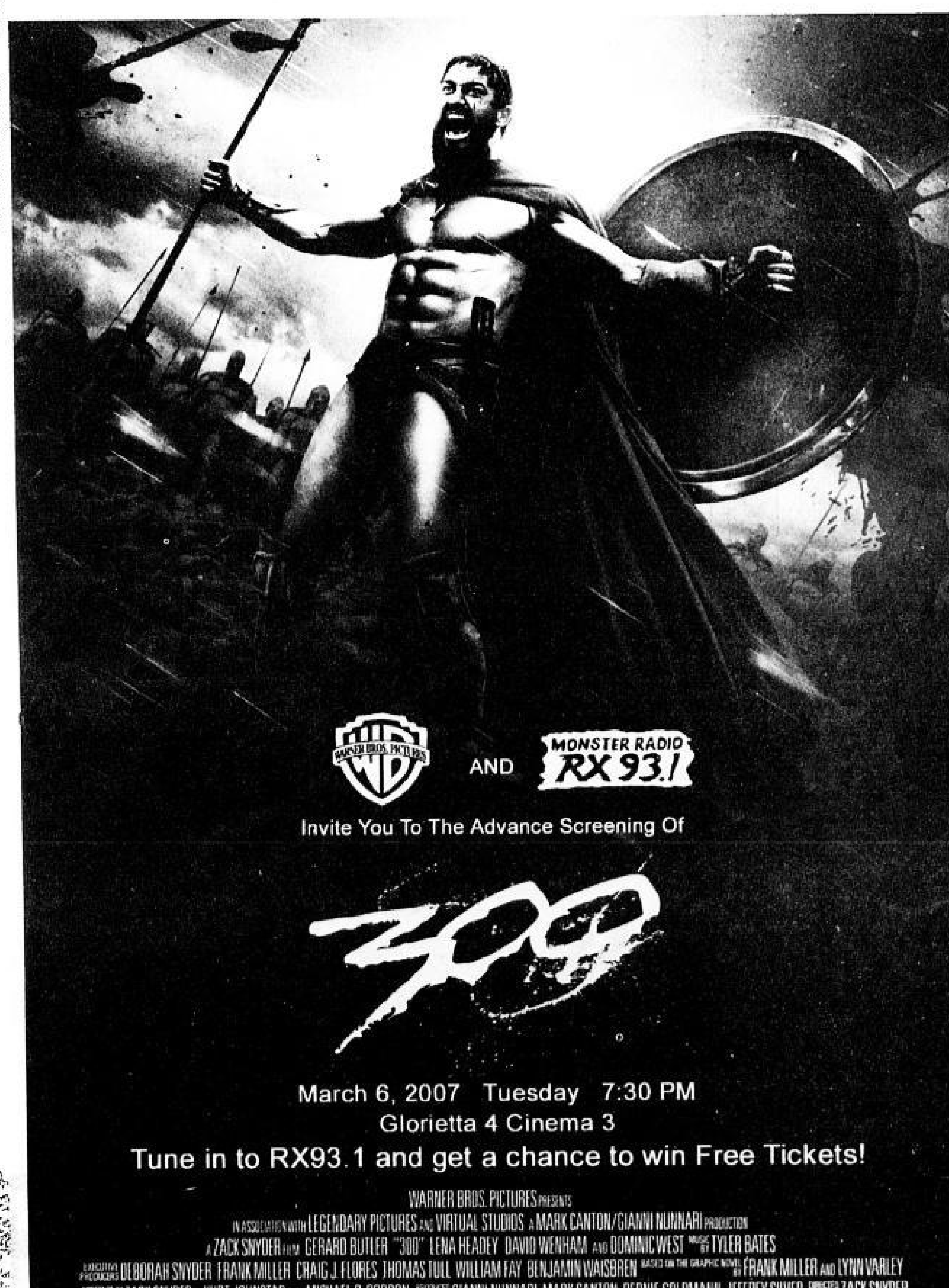
2. An extension unit of the GSIS Dipolog City Field Office in Ozamiz City to attend to the needs of the pensioners.

The first will facilitate transactions that cannot be accommodated by the participating banks. The second will bring the GSIS closer to its clientele.

Both proposals will relieve the aging and ailing pensioners in the area from the stress and risk of long-distance travel, which they have to make for periodic "physical confirmation." The GSIS should also consider that the elderly person is no longer mentally and physically alert to respond readily to the impositions of modern technology, like operating by himself or herself that so-called automated teller machine (ATM), or the computer to encode and send messages via the e-mail; or performing such seemingly simple act as texting via the cell phone.

As the saying goes, you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

—PANFILO J. ROSAURO,
Misamis University,
Ozamiz City 7200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Why GMA needs antiterror law

ON FEB. 8, 2007, CONGRESS passed the "antiterrorism bill," now euphemistically titled "Human Security Act of 2007." It is public knowledge that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was hell-bent on seeing the bill's passage.

The law legalizes, among others, warrantless arrests, prolonged detention and other affronts to civil liberties. With the law's very ambiguous definition of "terrorism," the Arroyo regime can use the law to harass, oppress and silence those who criticize the powers-that-be, or even those who merely seek redress of their grievances. The law will provide a legal shield for human rights violators and will surely encourage more abuses in government.

The law brings to mind Macario Sakay. For fighting for freedom and independence for the Filipino people, he was executed by the American colonizers as a bandit. In his last breath, he uttered these words: "Filipinas, farewell! Long live the Republic and may our independence be born in the future!" If he were alive today, he would have been qualified as a terrorist under the controversial law.

GMA hails the antiterrorism bill as "an institutional landmark of the 13th Congress at a time when the world looks upon the Philippines as a strong global player in the fight against terror."

Who is she deceiving? Didn't she cheat her way to electoral victory? That was an act of treason. That was an act that struck at the very heart of democracy. That was an act of terrorism.

GMA and her allies will only use the law to perpetuate themselves in power. It equips her with a legal tool to silence those who openly criticize the pervasive corruption in government as well as the anti-people and anti-poor policies of her administration. Her antiterrorism bill is in fact a "terror bill." It will not bring justice for the victims of extrajudicial killings. It will shield GMA and her terrorists from accountability for state-sponsored human rights violations.

The antiterror bill sends a clear message to the people. The ruling elite's loyalty is to GMA, not to the people. Instead of prioritizing pro-poor legislation, like the wage-hike bill, they rushed the passage of the antiterror bill because GMA needed it to please the US government.

In the coming elections, let us support the true defenders of human rights and vote out the proponents of the bill and the defenders of the anti-poor policies of the administration. Let us not be deceived by those who mock the essence of human rights and democracy.

—NORMA P. DOLLAGA,
general secretary,
Kasimbayan
(Kaptirang Simbahan
Para sa Bayan),
3/F NCCP 879 Edsa
Quezon City

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Democracy also taught in public schools

THIS IS A REACTION TO Brian Brotarlo's letter "Do they teach democracy in RP schools?" (INQUIRER, 3/2/07) He said he was not taught the "fundamental tenets of democracy," and neither could he remember being taught the Bill of Rights.

I wonder which school Brotarlo went to. All I remember is that during my second year in high school, we had a subject called Philippine Government. It was taught to us by one of our teachers who studied law. The subject awakened my deep interest in politics. It was one of the most important parts of the curriculum then, as it remains so today. So I cannot reconcile Brotarlo's letter with the fact that I learned about the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, suffrage, democracy and governments (democratic and otherwise) in school. Of course, the knowledge I gained inside the classroom was in no small degree supplemented or complemented by the information I obtained from the media.

Schools aim to provide formal education and should be the source of standard knowledge. But students, although they must pay attention to and learn from their teachers, should not be entirely dependent on them. They should also seek after, research on and discover what they must know.

The learning process does not begin and end in schools. In fact, education is a pursuit that ceases only when the mind has totally lost the ability to absorb.

I am wondering whether Brotarlo was absent when the subjects of democracy and Bill of Rights were taught in school.

—RAMON MAYUGA,
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Sandiganbayan orders arrest of Samar gov, 6 execs, trader

By Volt Contreras

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS issued warrants of arrest for Samar Gov. Milagrosa Tee Tan, six other provincial officials and a businessman for eight graft cases involving the purchase of some P16 million worth of supplies without public bidding.

The questioned procurements - which were for assorted goods, medicines, and electric fans—were made from December 2001 to December 2002, or during Tan's first term. The governor is currently on her second term and eligible for a third and last term in this year's local elections.

According to the Office of the Ombudsman, which filed the charges in November last year, the accused officials at one point cited the "emergency purchase" of relief goods for the victims of typhoon "Kidang" in December 2001 as an excuse for doing away with the bidding.

But a Commission on Audit report later established that the funds used, as approved by the provincial council, were really allotted for victims of an earlier typhoon, "Nanang," which hit Samar in November 2001.

Disaster before typhoon

Another purchase of medicines which cited Kidang victims as their recipients was found to be "anchored on a request" made by a local health board in October, or two months before the typhoon struck, the Ombudsman said.

The anti-graft court's 4th Division ordered the arrest of Tan; Rolando Montejo, provincial administrative officer; Damiano Conde, provincial treasurer; Romeo Reales, provincial accountant; Maximo Sison, provincial budget officer; Aurelio Bardaje Jr., general services officer; Numeriano Legaspi, GSO record officer and inspector.

Businessman Reynaldo Yabut, owner of Raechel's Shoppers Plaza in Catbalogan City, was also cited for arrest but only in connection with two of the eight cases.

Associate Justice Gregory Ong, division chair, found probable cause to merit the trial of Tan and the other accused for eight counts of alleged violation of Republic Act 3019, or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The warrants were signed by Ong last Feb. 27 but were released to the Sandiganbayan sheriff's office only late Friday.

Bail was set at P30,000 for each case, or P240,000 for the eight cases against Tan and the other provincial officials.

Electric fans

Some of the questionable purchases were for 176 electric fans worth P244,640, bought from Yabut's shopping outlet, from Nov. 13-20, 2002; electric fans worth P1,390,000, also from Yabut's store, from Dec. 9 to 20, 2002; assorted goods worth P3,680,558 from Wilmar's Minimart in Tacloban City, from Dec. 12, 2001 to Feb. 7, 2002; assorted medicines worth P2,258,815 from Rilem Pharma in Don Carlos Village, Pasay City, from Dec. 14, 2001 to Jan. 5, 2002.

FVR threatens to quit Lakas if Baby A daughter left out

By Gabriel Cardiñoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

RAMOS

ARENAS

DAGUPAN CITY—FORMER President Fidel Ramos has threatened to resign as chair emeritus of the Lakas-CMD if a daughter of his close friend, socialite Rosemarie "Baby" Arenas, and other candidates of his choice were not endorsed by the party.

Aside from Rachel, Ms Arenas' daughter, the former president, according to his spokesman Edgardo Malay, also endorsed the following as Lakas candidates: retired Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza (first district), Governor Agbayani (second district), Speaker Jose de Venecia (fourth district), Rep. Mark Cojuangco (fifth district) and Rep. Conrado Estrella III (sixth district).

ELECTION '07

Ramos and Ms Arenas are known to be very close friends but both denied having a special relationship.

Malay said the former president issued the warning to presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio days after Ramos sent President Macapagal-Arroyo a letter endorsing Vice Gov. Oscar Lambino for governor and Dr. Jamie Eloise Agbayani for vice governor.

"Former President Ramos endorsed Vice Governor Lambino for governor and Dr. Agbayani for vice governor," Malay said in a radio interview here.

Lambino and Agbayani, wife of incumbent Gov. Victor Agbayani, have announced their intention to run for governor.

De Venecia, Lakas president, said on Sunday that a party arbitration committee consisting of himself, Ms Arroyo, Ramos and Claudio would have to between Lambino and Agbayani the party's official gubernatorial candidate.

Malay said Ramos had made his recommendations based on existing party rules in selecting candidates.

He said that since Agbayani's husband, outgoing Governor Agbayani, is already on his last term, the equity of the incumbent will no longer apply to him.

"So, what we can apply is the 'equity of the originals' and the 'equity of loyalty' and clearly, Vice Governor Lambino fits these criteria," Malay said.

Lambino has been a Lakas member since it was founded by Ramos in 1992 and "there's no doubt that he has been very loyal to the party," Malay said.

In contrast, he said Dr. Agbayani is not a member of Lakas-CMD, or if she is, she might just have been recruited by her husband, who is Lakas-CMD provincial co-chair.

"There's no equity of the wife and she does not qualify in the equity of the originals and equity of loyalty," Malay said.

Malay said Cojuangco and Estrella, who both belong to the Nationalist People's Coalition, will be adopted candidates of the Lakas.

"This is a small thing that the former president is asking for," Malay said. "He has brought honor to Pangasinan by becoming the President of the Philippines and there is also the 'equity of the chair emeritus.' He should be listened to and he should be heeded," he added.

De Venecia was not available when reached for comment. An aide said that De Venecia was attending a meeting.

Provincial Administrator Virgilio Solis, speaking for Governor Agbayani, said: "Let's wait for the decision of the arbitration committee."

Lambino said he was very grateful that Ramos endorsed him. "It's a ticket that I believe will unite the party and will ensure the victory of Team Unity," he said.

Mayor sued, cleared in Muslim village raid backed by GMA party

KIDAPAWAN CITY—THE MAYOR OF A NORTH COTABATO town who had been charged with murder and arson in connection with a raid in 2003 on a Muslim community in his town has been taken in as a candidate for governor by President Macapagal-Arroyo's party, raising apprehension among Moro tribes.

Roger Talino, mayor of Carmen, North Cotabato, was running for governor under the Kabalikat ng Masang Pilipino (Kampi) of Ms Arroyo.

Talino was charged with murder and arson for the death of a Muslim resident and the burning of at least 12 houses during the raid on the Muslim community in Barangay Tambad on Oct. 15, 2003.

The case was dismissed by the Ombudsman but Talino's detractors questioned the anti-graft investigating body's jurisdiction over a criminal case.

"Muslim inhabitants in North Cotabato are worried ...," said Andis Aliudin, former commander of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Talino and Carmen village chairs Eddie Saberola, Mario Cabrillos and Ontoy Panzo had been charged with murder and arson by Mentano Pelayo, who survived the attack on Barangay Tambad.

The attack, allegedly upon the mayor's order, was carried out by Army-backed militiamen.

A dozen houses, including the residence of Aliudin, currently Tambad barangay chair, had been razed by the attackers, said MNLF secretariat head Romeo Sema.

Sema said this, and other alleged atrocities by the military and paramilitary forces committed against Muslims in Central Mindanao and the three provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, will be raised before the Organization of the Islamic Conference during its tripartite meeting on March 17 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

Ramos says bets for Senate not tackling issues head-on

BAGO CITY—FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL RAMOS yesterday called on this year's senatorial candidates to focus on issues important to the people instead of concentrating on making "pogi points."

"I do not see any of the candidates for senator focusing on issues.Instead it is all *pa pogi*," Ramos said here Sunday.

Ramos said today's electorate is much younger and smarter and candidates should be able to address poverty, livelihood, environment and development concerns to get the votes of the more discerning voters.

"First priority should not be *pa pogi* or popularity, but it must be competence, performance potential and vision that must be proven by all candidates," he said.

"In the coming elections the smarter candidates will do well to focus on people empowerment issues which carry a huge appeal for the masses," he added.

He, however, refused to name those whom he will vote for. "I will decide on election day because right now it is too muddled," said Ramos, who was in Bago City for the 20th death anniversary of Rafael Salas, who headed the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

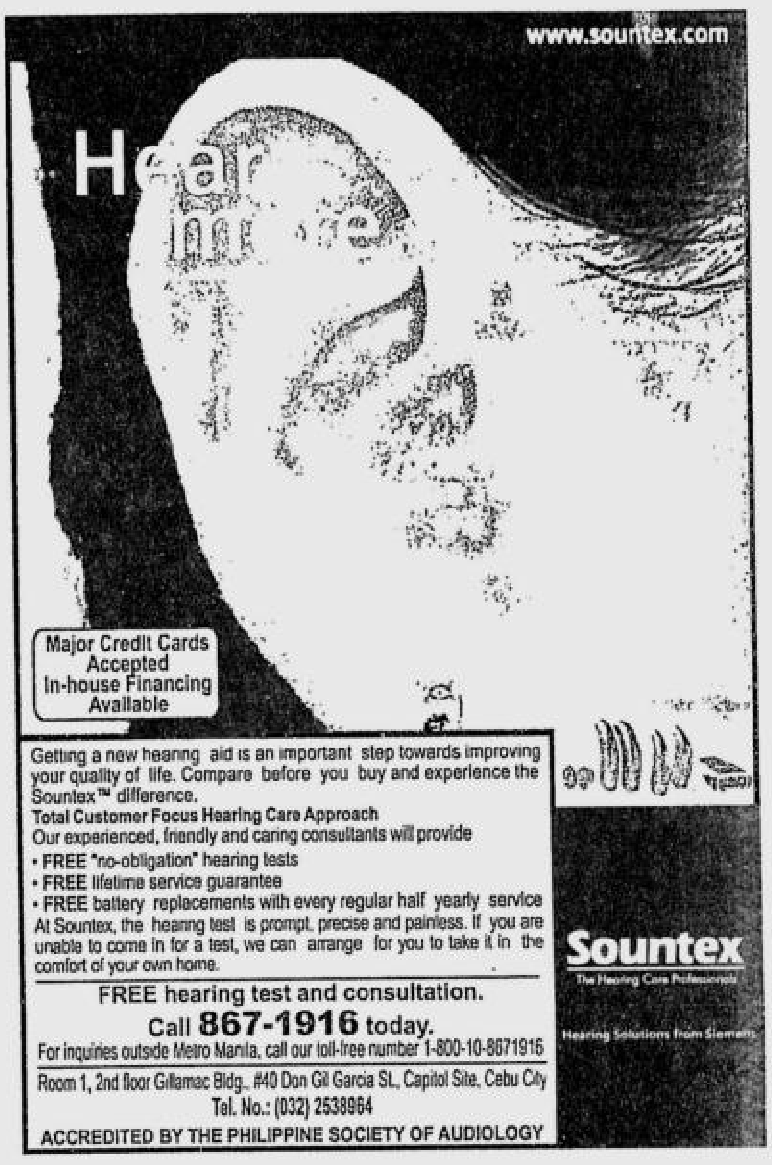
What should be the focus right now, he said, is for the government and the people to ensure that the country will have an honest, orderly, peaceful elections "that are credible to the people and to the international community."

Ramos also did not see anything new about the fact that some of President Macapagal-Arroyo's former critics are now with the administration slate while some of her erstwhile supporters are now with the opposition.

He pointed out that when Ms Arroyo first came into the presidency in January 2001, "there were so many there supporting her, but at the turn of the hat in three or four months most of them were already opposed to her."

Ramos was seen key to Ms Arroyo surviving the toughest challenge to her reign spurred by the Hello Garci controversy. He has warned Ms Arroyo, during the days when she faced an impeachment trial, that his support was waning.

Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas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PAREDES SISON BAUTISTA

Expressway to cut through military reservation in Ecija

PALAYAN CITY—A FOUR-LANE expressway will cut through the military reservation of the 38,000-hectare Fort Magsaysay here to form part of the Tarlac-Dingalan Port Highway.

"We are looking into that possibility now. That's why we are here with the highways officials," said Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., who visited the Army camp last week.

The Dingalan Port in Aurora is one of the major projects identified to be developed in the super regions mentioned by President Macapagal-Arroyo in her State of the Nation Address last year.

An expressway will also link the port to Clark Field in Pampanga and to Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales.

Public Works Assistant Secretary Ramon Aquino, who was with Ebdane, said an expressway that would pass through the military reservation in Fort Magsaysay was being considered a shorter realignment of the proposed highway than the original plan.

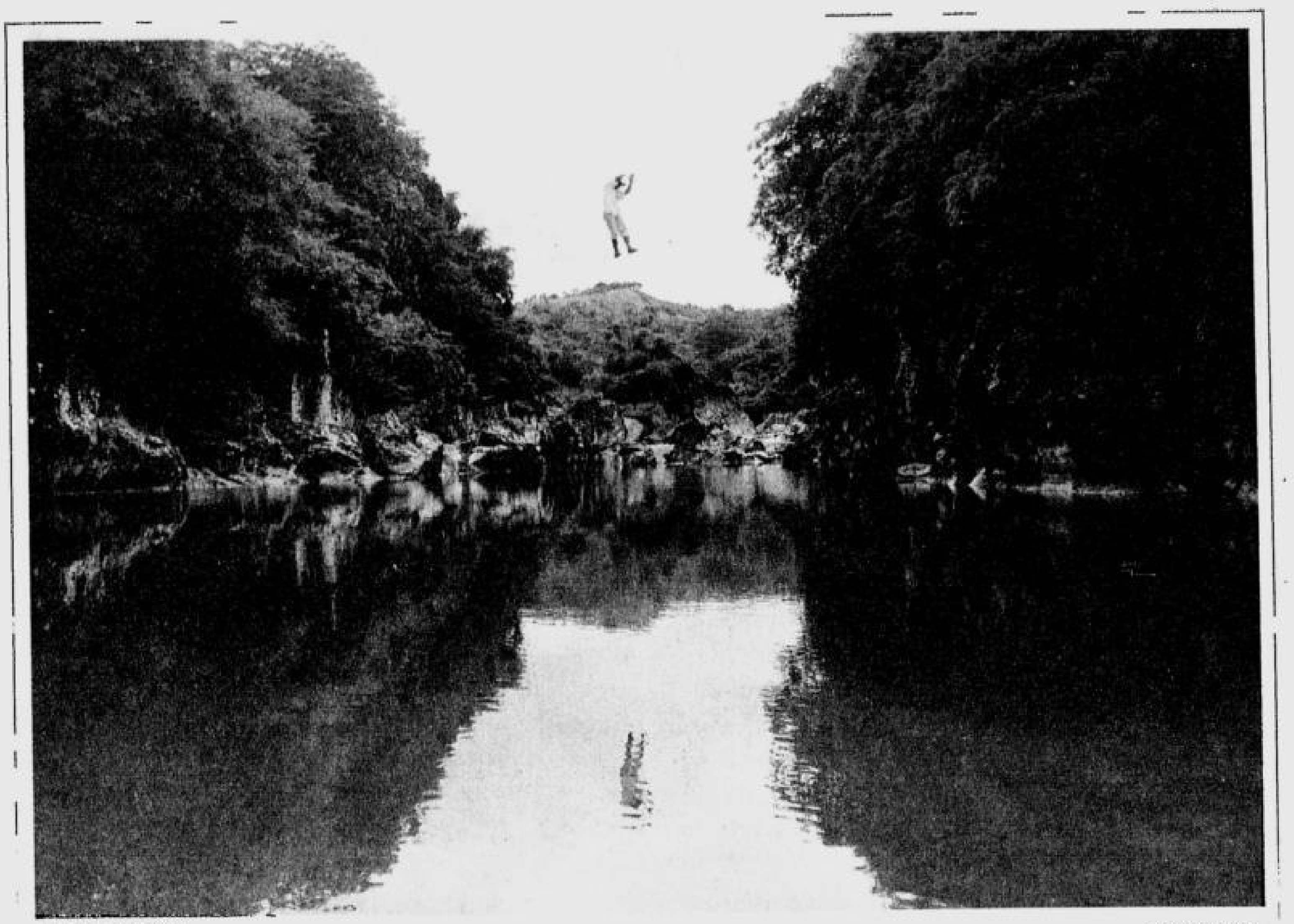
Now, this proposed highway will pass through La Paz town in Tarlac; Zaragoza and Sta. Rosa towns in Nueva Ecija, and then to Fort Magsaysay.

Originally, it would pass through Cabanatuan City to the Nueva Ecija-Aurora road. "It will definitely be less in development cost than the projected P726-million outlay for the original plan," Aquino said.

He said Ebdane and Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, had acceded to the realignment of the highway passing through Fort Magsaysay that extends up to Dingalan.

Ebdane said several internal and lateral roads were being planned to link the camp to the outlying towns and cities in Nueva Ecija.

The opening of the Dingalan Port and the establishment of an expressway from Dingalan to the Tarlac-Clark-Subic super highway will boost infrastructure development in Central Luzon, he said. *Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon*



EDWIN BACASMAS

TIGHTROPE

A man walks on a temporary foot bridge with only a wire to hold on to over the Balao River in a village in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Esperon says AFP probing abuses vs MNLF

ESPERON

INDANAN, SULU—THE MILITARY is investigating alleged abuses committed by government troopers against Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) forces here, Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Hermogenes Esperon said.

"Yes (we have an investigation). We are looking into the results of the operations. Not to put down anybody, but those found unwanting in their actuations have to be dealt with properly," Esperon told the INQUIRER in an interview after meeting with ground commanders and inspecting projects implemented by American soldiers under the Balikatan exercises.

The focus of the investigation is the Feb. 19 clash in Sitio Kilometer 4 in Barangay Tagbak, Esperon said.

Abdulhakim Abbilul, 14, was killed and a relative was wounded when Scout Rangers conducted an operation inside an area declared a peace zone.

Abbilul is a grandson of Khaid Adjibun, MNLF Lupah Sug State Revolutionary Command chair.

Also being investigated is the alleged attack by troopers of the Joint Special Operations Force, under Brig. General Ruperto Pabustan, on an MNLF camp in Sitio Marang, Barangay Buanza on Feb. 25.

At least 13 Scout Rangers were wounded when the MNLF forces fired back.

But Pabustan, in an earlier interview, said his men did not commit any violation of the peace agreement between the government and the MNLF as they were pursuing members of the Abu Sayyaf near the MNLF camp.

"It was not a deliberate attack. We were in hot pursuit operations against the ASG," he said.

But Pabustan said he was "open to any investigation, *kung yan ang kinakailangan* (if that was what is needed)."

With the willingness of the MNLF to sit down and talk with the AFP, Esperon said he was optimistic "that we can sort things out."

He said operating groups would be created to ensure proper coordination between the military and the MNLF.

"There will be better coordination," he said.

"I have some reports already. That's one of the things I want to look into further, but the end results would be better coordination if only to preclude any misunderstanding, we want to be more efficient in the operations," he added.

Several top military officers had been held by the MNLF in one of its camps as a result of clashes between the group and soldiers.

Although the MNLF has entered into a peace agreement with the government, its leaders refuse to surrender their firearms and keep a sizable cache of weapons.

Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

DENR, Benguet execs clash over 30-ha property

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—PROVINCIAL and environment officials found themselves at loggerheads over the planned conversion into a housing project of a 30 hectare-property in Itogon town for civilian and military personnel of the Philippine Military Academy.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources appeared before the provincial board on Jan. 22 to explain the survey conducted on the property. They snubbed two other invitations to appear, saying the officials were discourteous and grandstanding during the initial investigation.

The board told the DENR officials that they would bring the issue to the attention of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes to stop the planned housing site.

But they instead chose to appear before the Itogon municipal council to explain the circumstances behind the approval of the survey over the piece of property at Barangays Ucab and Gumatdang in Itogon.

The board had earlier questioned the survey which, it said, was a step to convert the property from an unclassified public forest to alienable land.

Thirty-three Ibaloi land holders protested the conduct of the survey last year. They said portions of the 30-hectare area formed part of their ancestral claims, some of which have already been applied for titling. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

More Cordillerans get titled lands

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—MORE LANDS ARE being distributed for titling in the name of indigenous peoples in the Cordillera, thanks to the environment department's advocacy to fast-track the disposition of remaining alienable and disposable lands in the region.

"The development will change the landscape in the region," said Samuel Peñafiel, environment regional executive director.

"More people will now appreciate land security through private titles aside from having their ancestral lands and claims," he said.

Records of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Land Management Services in Baguio City showed that 23,685 land titles were issued to qualified applicants in the region the past five years, covering an area of 10,292.38 hectares.

Benguet had the highest number of titles issued at 4,924 (2,506.70 ha), Apayao had 2,984 titles (1,133.01 ha), Kalinga, 2,933 titles (1,158.47 ha) and Mt. Province, 2,294 titles (743.64 ha).

Baguio City residents qualified for 709 titles with an area of 38.32 ha under the townsite sales application and the miscellaneous sales application programs.

This is aside from the 91 titles recently awarded to Baguio's old residents.

The DENR also distributed 10,137 land patents last year under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Peñafiel said the processing of titles was now faster than before because of the computerization of records.

Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Mine firm vows safe operations

A MINING FIRM IN PALAWAN YESTERDAY vowed to undertake measures in the enforcement of all environmental safeguards and standards to protect the welfare of the people and ecology in the area.

Platinum Group Metals Corp. (PGMC), in a statement, said it was committed to preserve the environment at a mining site where it operates in the municipality of Narra, Palawan.

It promised to do its best to provide alternative livelihoods, maintain the soil condition of the area and maintain its responsible operation.

The mining industry is the next engine of prosperity and economic growth in the country, next only to the information technology sector.

"We don't want short-term solutions in ensuring that mitigating measures have been put in place," Benjamin Obra, head of PGMC's environmental management and tenement department, said.

About 50,000 rubber tree seedlings are being cultivated in a five-hectare nursery of PGMC in Barangay San Isidro.

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HK's richest lend hand to help RP's poorest

From page A1

help Josephine. She gave medicines and food not only to Josephine but to the community as well.

Josephine died three years later, but Tan's mission to help the Philippines' poorest is thriving. In 1993, she registered the International Care Ministries (ICM) as a non-profit organization in the Philippines and Hong Kong.

"I have worked with the very rich but my heart is drawn to help the poorest of the poor. This fulfillment no words can express," Tan, who is now on sabbatical in Perth, Australia, said in an e-mail.

P25M for RP

By December 2006, what started as one woman's campaign against poverty drew 450 of Hong Kong's finest-dressed to the JW Marriot Hotel for a charity ball. That night, ICM raised HK$4 million (P25 million) for the Philippines.

"The people of Hong Kong are very, very generous, and many people who are well-endowed financially will be happy to give as long as they know how it's making a difference," said David Sutherland, managing director of Morgan Stanley-Asia and chair of the ICM board.

Sutherland said it took only three minutes for the ICM to solicit support for the pre-school centers during the banquet. It costs HK$32,000 to support one pre-school for a year.

The ICM had sought funding for its five existing centers in Mindanao, but the 25 hands that shot up when ICM "auctioned off" pre-school support would pave the way for the establishment of 25 more daycare centers in slum areas by June.

The ICM hires local teachers, some from the Tiboli and B'laan tribes, and two assistants to teach 6 to 12-year-old kids who have never had formal education. The children are also given one meal a day.

ICM's report showed that 70 percent of the children who entered their pre-schools have gone on to public primary schools.

Charity ball

The charity ball was the single biggest fundraising activity done by the ICM. The group raised around HK$2.8 million when the banquet was first held in 2005.

Trips to the major tennis championships in Europe, a vacation at the Amman resort in Bali and other island vacation homes owned by donors, works by Filipino artists Sanso, Carlo Magno and Ramon Orlina, and a diamond necklace were among those auctioned off at the 2006 ball.

Hong Kong provides 99 percent of the funding for the ICM. Three churches—Evangelical Community Church, The Vine and Faith Community Church—are supporting the group's feeding, medical and livelihood programs.

A handful of individuals in Hong Kong each donate at least US$50,000 a year to the ICM. There is but one donor in Manila.

"It's humbling how these people are helping our poor. You wish more Filipinos would do the same for their own people," said Hong Kong-based Filipino Daphne Ceniza-Kuok, who has pledged to support pre-schools this year.

Invitation ignored

Kuok and another Filipino, Jovi Zalamea, vice president of Goldman Sachs in Hong Kong, tried to host a dinner once for Philippine government officials and other private individuals to introduce the ICM but the invite was ignored.

"It was very difficult to get them involved," Kuok said.

It was lot easier to partner with local churches though. Since 1993, ICM has worked with over 1,000 churches in Negros Oriental and Occidental, Bohol, and Mindanao who choose the 25 poorest families in their area as beneficiaries of the ICM's feeding program.

These poor families are given four kilos of rice every week to supplement their food needs. Mothers are given emotional and spiritual counseling, health education and some livelihood start-up for six months, after which the local church takes over the program.

THIS IS THE FACE of Filipino poverty that moved wealthy Hong Kong residents to take out their checkbooks and support programs that make a difference in the lives of the poor. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Last year alone, the ICM distributed four million doses of medicines and 580,000 lbs of rice. It also conducted 1,300 open-air clinics last year, according to Tan.

The ICM employs 150 full-time staff in the Philippines and continues to train pastors and church workers in counseling and health care.

"The heroes are the ones who have given their lives to helping others, not the Hong Kong people. We just provide money," Sutherland said.

"We have a commitment to keep the organization in indigenous capacity, keep it run by Filipinos for Filipinos," he said.

RP's 2nd largest slum

Unknown to many, Bacolod has the second largest slum community in the Philippines, the Banago Riverside. In a place where sugar barons have continued to resist land reform, more than half the city's 500,000 population are still considered squatters, according to the local government.

"The poverty they live in is overwhelming," said Sutherland's wife Deanna, who goes house to house in the slums when she visits the partner churches.

"It's surreal," she said. "You think, 'how do people live like this?' It's different from the world we live in, but there's compassion. These are people. It could be me there," she said.

Such eye-opener is something the ICM shares with Hong Kong's sheltered, well-heeled people during "vision trips." The weekend trips, done three to four times a year, takes curious individuals to the slums being supported by the ICM.

"A lot of people who come are financially secure and have never been to anything like this, and yet they have this curiosity and feeling that they owe something back to the world and they don't know what to do about it. That's why it's called a vision trip," Sutherland said.

Special medical cases

"We're not pretending that you're going to do much for these people. It's almost tourism, but people come back very compelled... They see a part of life that they've never seen before," he said.

Australian banker Harry Turner and his wife Julie, who does a lot of administrative work for ICM in Hong Kong, were among those who have been moved by such exposure.

Coming from Australia where there is not much poverty and then moving to Hong Kong, where there is "overwhelming excess" for expatriates, the Turners were jarred by what they saw.

There was a teener who had no anus, a five-year-old girl who had a stick in her eye and whose eyeball was almost popping out of its socket, and a 16-year-old whose face had been burned when her father threw a kerosene lamp at her.

All of them were special medical cases supported by the ICM. They have all undergone surgery to correct their conditions. The ICM is still looking for more partner doctors and health care workers who could offer their services pro bono.

A dose of reality

Deanna said parents who go on vision trips usually take their children with them—kids who spend their Saturdays in exclusive clubs and for whom lunches at Shangri-La hotels are ordinary—to give them a dose of reality.

Turner, who sits on the ICM board, said one reason he and his wife got involved was to give their kids a level of reality, to encourage them to grow up with hearts for the poor.

"So many kids grow up safe and secluded. It's not that they haven't got a heart; it's just that they haven't got a clue," the Macquarie Bank Ltd. division director said.

"They have no exposure, and no exposure means no concern, no care, no compassion. But if you're exposed, you respond in some way," he said.

Expansion

The ICM is set to spend US$1 million for its programs this year, and is looking at expanding to Cebu or Iloilo.

"The challenge for us in Hong Kong is to expand our creative ways to raise funds because the ministry is becoming bigger," said Turner, who visited the Tiboli tribe in General Santos in January.

The Sutherlands, who fly to the Philippines at least four times a year, have seen how the ministry has grown, noting with every visit how women who had been despondent six months ago, now receive them with a smile.

"They are changed because they have found a home, a community. They have built relationships with each other," Deanna said.

But it turns out, the poor are not the only ones helped.

Turner quipped: "The Philippines is an extraordinary country, with a level of extremes... We go there hoping to serve and come back thinking we're the ones who've been helped."

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LIVING THE HIGH LIFE WHILE FILIPINOS STARVE

While millions of Filipinos starve, Tonyboy Cojuangco refuses to return billions of pesos that could buy food for the poor. And while Tonyboy lives in palatial homes in posh villages, millions of Filipinos do not even have roofs over their heads.

Yes, Tonyboy may only have disdain for us, poor Filipinos. However, it is he who should be ashamed for living the high life at the expense of indigent Filipinos.

"millions of Filipinos do not even have roofs over their heads."

Since 1986, Tonyboy's family held on to 111,415 shares of the Philippine Telecommunication Investment Corp. (PTIC) until the Supreme Court declared last year the shares to be ill-gotten. Estimates now put the dividends collected by Tonyboy from the shares to run into billions of pesos.

And if Tonyboy returned the PTIC shares, it was only because he was forced into it by the Supreme Court. Now, the government should also force Tonyboy to cough up the dividends!

What is the government waiting for? Why hasn't it moved to sequester the companies that Tonyboy bought using ill-gotten PTIC earnings? Why not attach his mansions, flashy cars and other trappings of wealth?

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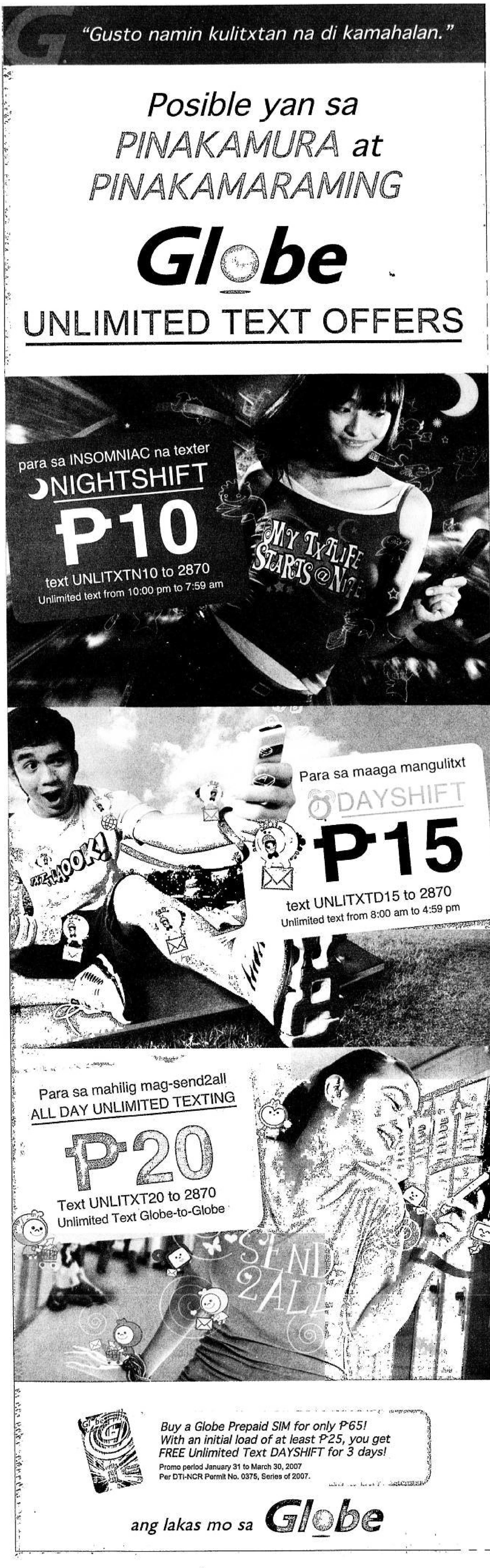
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GIVING IT ANOTHER GO. Ang Ladlad party-list chair Danton Remoto is shown in this file photo before the Commission on Elections ruled him out as a nuisance candidate for the May polls. Remoto is appealing the decision. Ang Ladlad is the first political party composed of Filipino LGBT (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders). REM ZAMORA/FILE PHOTO

Gays decry turn down by Comelec of their bet

By Nikko Dizon

AIAN YAMBOT, AN OPENLY GAY NURSE, IS not a member of Ang Ladlad. Nor could he recall the name of the gay candidate running for senator in the May elections.

But he is all for giving the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) sector a seat in Congress.

So is Dhiane Avelino, a 36-year-old gay man who earns a living by doing home-service manicure and pedicure.

"We need someone who is really good, smart and brave enough to fight for us," Avelino said.

But Yambot was appalled that Ang Ladlad and senatorial aspirant Danton Remoto were facing major stumbling blocks in their campaign to give equal rights to members of the Philippine gay community.

"I am affected by the Comelec's decision. It is obviously discrimination against us," Yambot, a former flight attendant who now teaches at a nursing tutorial school, told the INQUIRER.

Yambot was referring to the decision of the second division of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to junk Ang Ladlad's petition for party-list accreditation, and to its recent announcement that Remoto—a university professor, Fulbright scholar and author of some 20 books—was among the 42 senatorial aspirants that the poll body considered to be nuisance candidates.

"We need someone in Congress to voice out our rights to avoid discrimination. Our community is growing and there is a sense of awareness among people that gays have a lot to offer society, too. It's high time that someone from our gender be allowed in Congress," Yambot said.

Double whammy

Remoto told the INQUIRER that he was getting queries from the LGBT community if the "double whammy" was some sort of discrimination against it.

Remoto obviously was slighted that the certificate of candidacy of Richard Gomez, whom the professor described as a "wash-out, has-been actor," was given due course by the Comelec because "he was accompanied by his supporters."

Remoto, 43, said that modesty aside, his curriculum vitae would show that aside from teaching English at the Ateneo de Manila University for the past two decades, he had also taught for a year at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

He authored "Ang Ladlad," the first anthology of gay literature in the country.

Remoto obtained his undergraduate and masteral degrees from the Ateneo, studied in the United States and England, and is now a candidate for a Ph.D. at the University of the Philippines.

But even with an impressive educational background, Remoto said he was not representing just the gay elite and intellectuals.

"We have been going around the communities, even the slums to reach out to the LGBTs," he said.

Father campaigning

Remoto said the Comelec should be "happy and proud" that an openly gay man was running for public office in the Philippines and in Asia, for that matter.

His father, a former military man and lawyer, is campaigning for him, Remoto said.

Remoto said the LGBTs were raring to take to the streets, or at least rally in front of the Comelec, to show support for him and Ang Ladlad.

"But you're not seeing any of them yet. There's no rally by gays because I am telling them that we will exhaust all legal means first," Remoto said.

Yesterday, Ang Ladlad filed a motion for reconsideration asking the Comelec that its petition for party-list accreditation be granted.

Today, Remoto will join the other nuisance candidates in facing the Comelec en banc to convince the commissioners of his intention to run for a Senate seat.

In its motion for reconsideration, Ang Ladlad said that while Philippine society was "tolerant" of LGBTs, "this does not translate to equality of opportunities and parity before the law."

Ang Ladlad included a list of its provincial coordinators in 11 of 13 provinces in the country. To date, Ang Ladlad has more than 16,000 members nationwide, excluding the group's closeted members, according to Remoto.

It also serves as the umbrella organization of 21 LGBT organizations nationwide—from Abra to Metro Manila to Cebu to Zamboanga.

Remoto said the Philippines was ready for an openly gay legislator.

Are you 'green' or 'gray,' eco groups to ask bets

By Jocelyn R. Uy

HOW GREEN ARE YOU, MR. AND MS Senator?

A group of environmentalists espousing a "green future" will soon find out.

As part of its Green Electoral Initiative this year, Greenpeace and EcoWaste Coalition yesterday started sending senatorial candidates survey forms tackling major environmental issues.

Based on the candidates' responses, they will be ranked using a "green to gray" rating spectrum. Green has the highest score of 100, while gray has the lowest score of 0.

Results will released on April 22 (Earth Day) which the public could use as a guide when they cast their ballots on May 14.

"We need to make our democracy work for a greener future. The environment crisis is as serious as the political crisis. The choices the electorate will make in May will help decide whether the country is headed for a green or gray future," Von Hernandez, campaign director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, said yesterday in a press conference.

Some of the questions are: Will you vote to reject or ratify the Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA)? Will you support the mandatory labeling of all products containing genetically modified organisms sold in the Philippines? What legislative measures will you propose that would mainstream the production and use of clean fuels, increase motor efficiency and reduce fuel consumption?

Senatorial candidates will be asked to give their stand on water, solid waste, agriculture, logging and mining. They will also be asked to disclose their track record in the environmental field.

Rating candidates, according to their "greenness," would push them to think about their positions on key issues affecting the environment, Hernandez said.

He added that the country had experienced serious environmental threats and calamities, yet the environment has failed to figure prominently in any of the candidates' agenda.

The first Green Electoral Initiative was launched during the presidential election in 2004 with the late Raul Roco emerging as the "greenest" followed by Fernando Poe Jr.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ranked third with a dismal yellow rating, followed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson, while Bro. Eddie Villanueva placed last because he didn't answer the questionnaire.

"The 'green list' will not really translate into votes but will assist the public in their choice of candidates in the elections, Hernandez said.

Aplus METRO
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Leviste allowed to leave hospital

But doctors say former gov's health remains 'precarious'

By DJ Yap

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. JOSE Antonio Leviste may be discharged from the hospital within the week but his health remains precarious, his doctors testified in court yesterday.

"He is (ready for discharge) not today but in a few days," Dr. Raynato Kasilag, Leviste's private physician, told Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati City Regional Trial Court Branch 150.

"But I cannot guarantee that nothing will happen if he is brought back to the Makati City Jail," he added.

Leviste, who was recently charged with the murder of his longtime aide, Rafael de las Alas, has been confined at the Makati Medical Center since Feb. 23 for hypertension and gastrointestinal bleeding.

Kasilag and two other doctors testified yesterday in connection with Leviste's motion that he be allowed to stay at the MMC. The motion, however, is being blocked by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco who accused Leviste of feigning illness.

Velasco has asked the court to immediately order the former governor's return to the Makati City Jail.

Ramon Liboro, another doctor of the MMC, said tests revealed that Leviste's blood pressure dropped because of internal bleeding, due to the anticoagulation medication he has been taking.

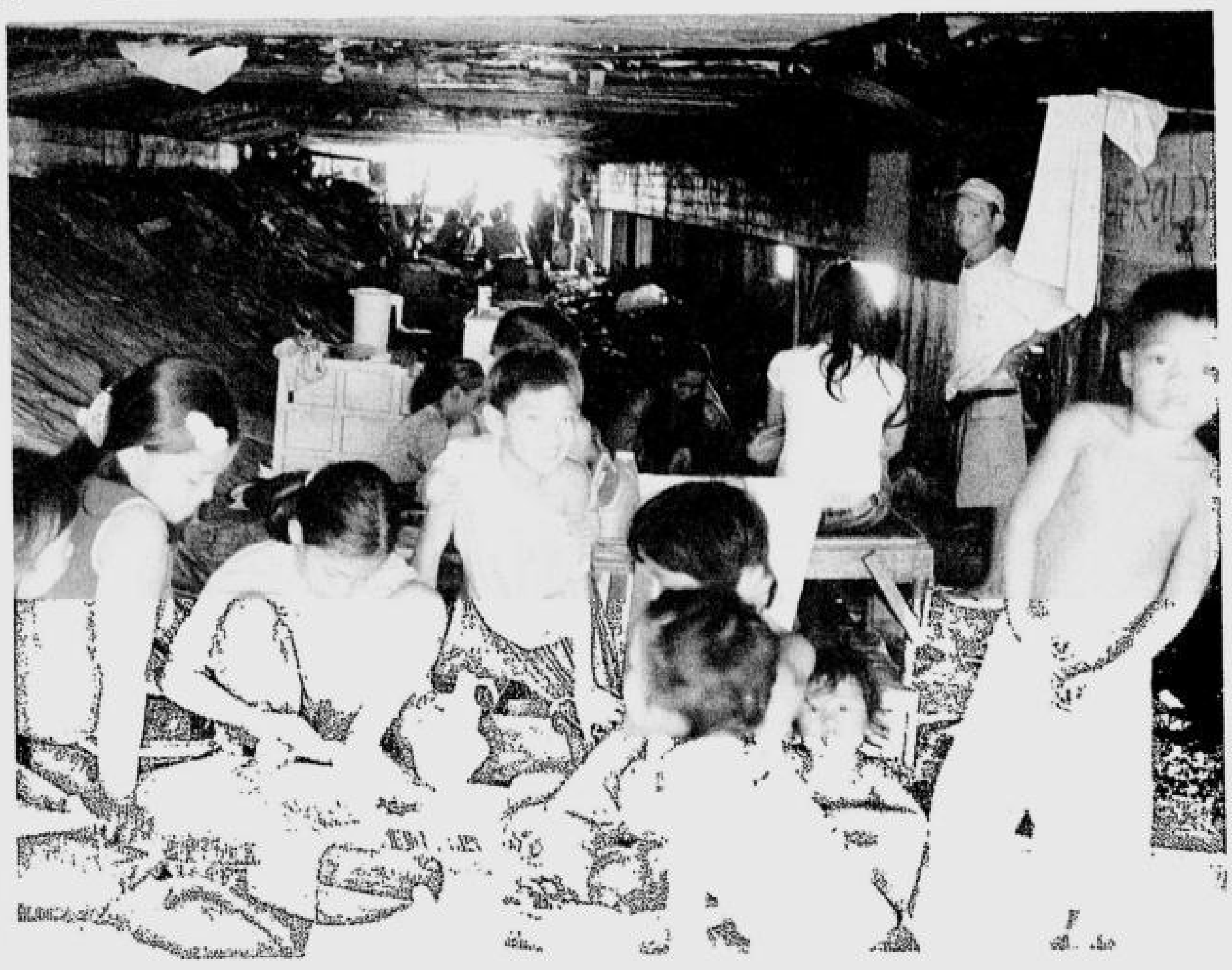
To stop the bleeding, doctors reduced the dosage of the medication and introduced a weaker anticoagulant which is intended to reduce Leviste's risk of suffering a stroke, he said.

Since the dosage of anticoagulants has been lowered, Leviste now stood a higher risk of transient ischemic attacks, or mild strokes which he has experienced several times in the past 10 years, the doctors said.

On the other hand, National Bureau of Investigation medicolegal officer Cesar Visquerra, who conducted an independent physical examination of Leviste on March 1, said the former governor seemed "generally fine."

"He was a little weak when answering my questions. He was bedridden but he could sit up ... He was generally okay," he said.

Visquerra also concurred with Kasilag's opinion that Leviste may be discharged in a few days.



BACK AGAIN Nearly a week after their houses underneath the bridge on the South Superhighway near Quirino Avenue in Manila were demolished, residents have gone back to the structure.
RODEL ROTONI

Malabon tops undernourished children list in Metro—study

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER OF UNDERnourished children in Malabon has slightly shrank, the city still has the most number of cases of undernutrition in Metro Manila, figures from the National Nutrition Council showed.

The number of children under 5 years old in the city suffering from undernutrition shrank from 10.70 percent in 2005 to 7.91 percent last year, the NNC-National Capital Region office said.

Undernourished kids have lower than normal weight, a condition that could later lead to illnesses and complications if left untreated, NNC executive director Maria Bernardita Flores said.

Next to Malabon City, other areas where undernutrition was also prevalent were Valenzuela City (6.45 percent), Taguig City (6.10 percent), Navotas (6.09 percent) and Quezon City (5.45 percent).

On the other hand, the cities of Las Piñas (3.50 percent), Marikina (2.01 percent) and Makati (1.20 percent), had the fewest cases of undernutrition, the 2006 report of the NNC-NCR also said.

The study, which was presented last Friday during a meeting attended by health workers and officials from the 17 local government units in Metro Manila, added that the prevalence of undernutrition in the National Capital Region went down from 5.32 percent in 2005 to 4.66 percent last year.

Those who attended the meeting, meanwhile, vowed to implement President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to reduce the incidence of hunger in the country from 800,000 families during the third quarter of 2006 to 100,000 this year.

The NCR has been listed as a priority area along with 10 other provinces for the implementation of the Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program. Flores said the national government is devoting P100 million for the priority areas.

The program has five key components, she added. It will launch an education campaign to promote good nutrition, start projects to increase food production, improve food delivery, improve livelihood and manage population growth in the priority areas.

Flores said the Food For School program, where Grade 1 students in public schools are given a kilo of rice each every day for 90 to 120 days, is still ongoing. This has been implemented in all public schools in the metropolis since last year, she added.

Starting next school year, beneficiaries will also get free hot meals and glasses of milk daily, she added.

Flores also showed the INQUIRER specific action plans for towns and cities in the metropolis, which include the launching of food production projects where residents will be taught new technologies on growing vegetables and putting up makeshift fish pens in urban areas.

Apart from the NCR, other priority areas include the Mountain Province, Camarines Norte, Masbate, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Maguindanao, Sarangani, Lanao del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Norte.

BRILLANTE (left): Libel case part of political harassment.
ERIK ARAZAS

Brillante out on reduced bail for libel

By DJ Yap

FORMER MAKATI CITY VICE MAYOR Roberto Brillante yesterday turned himself in to a judge and posted bail in connection with the P10 million libel case filed against him by his political rival, Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Brillante appeared in the sala of Judge Selma Palacio Alaras of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 62 at around 11 a.m. and paid P6,000 as cash bond for his provisional liberty.

The bail recommended for his release was initially set at P12,000 but Brillante asked Alaras to lower it, a motion the judge granted for humanitarian reasons.

On Monday, Alaras issued an arrest warrant against Brillante after the Makati city prosecutor found probable cause to indict him for libel.

The charges stemmed from a statement the former vice mayor distributed to media during a press conference on Nov. 3, in which he allegedly made defamatory remarks against Binay.

Brillante had called the press conference to react to the dismissal of a graft case he had lodged against Binay before the Sandiganbayan concerning the purchase of allegedly overpriced office furniture for the new City Hall.

Brillante said the libel case was part of Binay's "continued repression and harassment of political opponents."

Binay's political adviser, Lito Anzures, meanwhile, said Brillante should not cry political harassment.

"He's been convicted twice for libel," Anzures said. "Given the track record of this person, who's going to believe him?".

Cops probe case of woman who dies after clinic visit

By Margaux C. Ortiz

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING THE circumstances surrounding the case of a 24-year-old woman who died after a visit to a clinic in Quezon City offering cosmetic surgery services.

Florian Quilang, of 14 Kalayaan C, Batasan Hills, Quezon City, died of complications at the Far Eastern University Hospital on Saturday morning, police records show.

According to SPO2 Jun Mortel of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) Homicide Section, the victim and her friend, Rosalina Ramirez, went to the Nonette Lim Rejuvenating and Skin Firming Clinic on F. Castillo Street in Project 4, Quezon City last Friday to have the former's breasts and buttocks enhanced.

However, while the clinic staff was injecting Quilang with a still unknown medicine, she experienced nausea and dizziness and decided not to go through with the procedure, Mortel said.

On their way home, Quilang asked her friend to bring her to a doctor because she had a severe headache.

From a clinic, the victim was brought to the FEU Hospital for further medical treatment.

However, she died a day after the procedure, initial police investigation showed.

The INQUIRER went to the clinic to get the staff's reaction but found the establishment closed. According to the building caretaker, the clinic had been closed since Saturday.

Trinidad seeks appeal in Supreme Court

By Julie M. Aurelio

"I NEVER EXPECTED TO GET JUSTICE anyway," dismissed Pasay Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad said yesterday after the Ombudsman dismissed his plea that it reverse its Jan. 12 resolution ordering his dismissal from office.

"Considering the haste with which they came out with the decision, I never expected to get justice anyway," he added in a phone interview.

In a resolution dated Feb. 23 which was released only the other day, the Ombudsman dismissed allegations that Trinidad and 11 other city officials were not accorded due process after it ordered their suspension for six months beginning last September.

The sanction was meted out against Trinidad, Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto and 10 councilors after they reportedly approved a multimillion peso garbage contract without conducting a public bidding.

Except for two councilors who were reinstated, all were ordered dismissed from government service last January.

LUNGSOD NG PASAY
KALAKHANG MAYNILA

IT'S BUSINESS at usual for Pasay Mayor Allan Panaligan (left) and Vice Mayor Arvin Tolentino who led yesterday's flag raising ceremony.
REM ZAMORA

No copy

Ironically, Trinidad said he and the other officials have yet to receive a copy of the Ombudsman resolution.

"Even the camp of current Mayor Allan Panaligan has a copy. I find it highly questionable," the dismissed mayor pointed out.

"I plan to file an appeal before the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals. If I receive the Ombudsman resolution, I have 15 days to reply to that," he added.

Trinidad said he remains optimistic that the Ombudsman ruling will be overturned.

"Certainly, that decision is not final and executory. I will still fight," he told the Inquirer, adding that he is bent on running for mayor in May.

Calixto, on the other hand, has been holding office at the Office of Senior Citizens' Affairs in the city's sports complex, with supporters keeping him company day and night.

The Court of Appeals the other week directed the Ombudsman and the interior department to stop implementing the order for Calixto's dismissal from service.

Armed with the temporary restraining order issued by the appelate court, Calixto went to City Hall to take back his post and sit as acting mayor.

When he was refused entry, he made the OSCA his temporary office.

Last Friday, the Office of the Solicitor General asked the appelate court to withdraw the TRO it issued in Calixto's favor.

The dismissed vice mayor, meanwhile, said he will continue to sit as acting Pasay mayor until he hears from the appelate court.

"The TRO has not been lifted yet. I will continue assuming the duties of acting mayor," Calixto said.

Camanava flood control project ready for rainy days

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE MUCH BALLYHOOED P5.1-billion Camanava Flood Control Project, which officials had promised would solve the perennial flooding problem in North Metro, will be put to the test once the rainy season begins.

Despite doubts from local officials and reservations of some geologists, project director Carla Bartolo says the project is ready to roll.

The project, consisting of systems of pumping stations, drainage channels and dikes, is already 72 percent complete as of February, Bartolo said.

Construction of the project began in September 2003 and was originally scheduled to be completed in September of this year. Local officials had complained about the slow pace of the work, but Bartolo assured everyone that the work would said be "substantially complete" by the time the deadline comes around.

The completion of a pumping station in Maypajo, Caloocan City and channel improvements in the Catmon Creek in Malabon City, however, would be delayed until mid 2008, because of problems in relocating informal settlers, Bartolo added.

Working

The pumping station on Lapu-Lapu Avenue in Navotas is already functioning and has improved the situation in the coastal town, she said.

The cities of Caloocan, Malabon and Navotas town experience flooding—rain or shine—during high tide when water flows into the mainland.

The situation worsens when high tides coincide with heavy rains.

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco, one of the vocal critics of the delay in the construction, said that while the pumping station of the billion-peso project was already functional, it was boosted by mini-pumping stations built by the local government.

Tiangco said they had already built 15 pumping stations in the last three years, with two more under construction.

Geologists from the University of the Philippines had earlier expressed concern about the project, saying its design had not been adjusted to the rate by which the mainland is sinking relative to the sea level, because of heavy water extraction.

But Bartolo said they had already conducted technical studies on the issue specifically for the project.

She said she was confident the project, even if it not yet complete, would greatly improve the situation in the area, and that proof of this would be seen during the coming rainy season.

sbma SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY
Bldg 229, Waterfront Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Phils. 2222
Tel. No. (6347) 252-4895/4381/4382 Facsimile (6347) 252-3014
E-mail: acarreza@sbma.com / Website: http:www.sbma.com

THE SPECIAL BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF NCT-1 AND NCT-2

INVITATION FOR COMPARATIVE PROPOSALS

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) invites interested Port Operators (challengers) to participate in the challenge process for its Project *Operation and Management of New Container Terminal-1 (NCT-1).*

Request for Comparative Proposal (RFCP)/ bid documents are available at the SBMA-Project Management Office, Engineering Department, Bldg. 29, Subic Bay Freeport Zone starting at 8:00 a.m. of **March 14, 2007 up to 5:00 p.m. of June 18, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php100,000.00 or US$2,000.00 to the SBMA Treasury Department at Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ. For inquiries, please contact the Office of the SBAC at tel. nos. (6347) 252-4381 to 83, 252-4895, facsimile (6347) 252-3014 and website: http://koreyo.sbma.com.

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Pre-bid) shall be held on **May 9, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the SBMA Corporate Board Room, Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ. The deadline for submission of complete bid proposals shall be on or before 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2007 at the SBAC Chairman's Office, Office of the Administrator and CEO, Room 205, Bldg. 229 Waterfront Road, SBFZ.

ARMAND C. ARREZA
Administrator and CEO/Chairman, SBAC for the Commercialization of NCT-1 and NCT-2

(PDI – Feb. 27; March 6 & 13, 2007)

DID YOU KNOW

CLOVER Theater, which used to be found at the foot of MacArthur Bridge in Quiapo, was famous for "bodabil"(vaudeville) shows that catered to the masses. It was owned by Spanish-Portuguese national Don Jose Zarah. Among those who performed there were Dolphy, the Reycard Duet, Pugo, Panchito, Chiquito, Palito, Dely Atay-atayan and Elizabeth Ramsey. German Moreno worked as a janitor there before entering show business.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2007-003-g

Bidding for the Procurement of 50,000 Pads of ME-5 (Contribution Payment Return Forms for the Employed Sector)

The **Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)**, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2006 and continuing appropriation of 2007, intends to apply the sum of **PhP 2,494,500.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract to be bid for the **Procurement of 50,000 pads of ME-5 (Contribution Payment Return Forms for the Employed Sector.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders who can comply with the following specifications and delivery schedule:

Specifications:

Quantity	50,000 pads (10,000,000 sheets) (50 sets per pad @ 4 copies per set)
Size	7.75 inches (width) x 5 inches (length)
Material	Imported "Quality" Colored Carbon-less Paper Impression must be clear up to the last ply 1st ply - White Carbon-less paper 2nd ply - Yellow Carbon-less paper 3rd ply - Green Carbon-less paper 4th ply - Pink Carbon-less paper Wrapping Paper Cover Chipboard Back Cover
Process	Offset printing / Red Gum Padded Back to back printing on all copies
Serial Numbers	Pre-numbered (9 digits) All Numeric (Crash Numbering) 50,000 pads (215737501 - 218237500)
Packaging	50 pads per corrugated box Serial numbers must be posted on two (2) opposite sides of the box

Schedule of Deliveries:

Schedule of Delivery	ME-5		Delivery Date
	No. of Pads	Series Nos.	
1st	15,000	215737501 - 216487500	10 days upon receipt of notice to proceed
2nd	15,000	216487501 - 217237500	10 days after the first delivery
3rd	20,000	217237501 - 218237500	10 days after the second delivery

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws of regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to the technical and financial requirements. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC)** in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from **8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents should be purchased by interested Bidders from **March 6-15, 2007** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **PhP 5,000.00 cash.** The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **March 16, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.** at the **OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room** on or before **March 29, 2007, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room**. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on March 29, 2007, 10:30 a.m. at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2005 to CY 2006 is the relevant period for contracts, which will be required to be submitted by PhilHealth.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
MR. JOSEPH O. VERGARA
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709 Shaw Blvd, Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
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(Sgd.)Atty. **VALENTIN C. GUANIO**
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services

(PDI – March 6, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2007-004-g

Bidding for the Procurement of 50,000 Pads of MI-5 Remittance Forms for the Individually Paying Sector

The **Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)**, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2006 and continuing appropriation of 2007, intends to apply the sum of **PhP 2,290,500.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract to be bid for the **Procurement of 50,000 pads of MI-5 Remittance Forms for the Individually Paying Sector.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders who can comply with the following specifications and delivery schedule.

Specifications:

Quantity	50.000 pads (10,000.000 sheets) (50 sets per pad @ 4 copies per set)
Size	7 inches (width) x 5 inches (length)
Material	Imported "Quality" Colored Carbon-less Paper Impression must be clear up to the last ply 1st ply - White Carbon-less paper 2nd ply - Yellow Carbon-less paper 3rd ply - Green Carbon-less paper 4th ply - Pink Carbon-less paper Wrapping Paper Cover Chipboard Back Cover
Process	Offset printing / Red Gum Padded Back to back printing on all copies
Serial Numbers	Pre-numbered (9 digits) All Numeric (Crash Numbering) 50,000 pads (110986401 - 113486400)
Packaging	50 pads per corrugated box Serial numbers must be posted on two (2) opposite sides of the box

Schedule of Deliveries:

Schedule of Delivery	MI-5		Delivery Date
	No. of Pads	Series Nos.	
1st	15,000	110986401 - 111736400	10 days upon receipt of notice to proceed
2nd	15,000	111736401 - 112486400	10 days after the first delivery
3rd	20,000	112486401 - 113486400	10 days after the second delivery

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws of regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to the technical and financial requirements. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

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A complete set of Bidding Documents should be purchased by interested Bidders from **March 6-16, 2007** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **PhP 5,000.00 cash.** The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **March 19, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.** at the **OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room** on or before **April 2, 2007, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on April 2, 2007, 10:30 a.m. at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2005 to CY 2006 is the relevant period for contracts, which will be required to be submitted by PhilHealth.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(Sgd.)Atty. **VALENTIN C. GUANIO**
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services

(PDI – March 6, 2007)

6 hurt as watchman foils robbery in QC

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A SHOT INTENDED TO STOP a thief in his tracks ended up hitting six people, including two young boys, in front of a supermarket in Quezon City Sunday afternoon.

Ironically, the robber escaped while policemen arrested the shooter, Enrique Banda, 27, a watchman of Puregold Price Club Supermarket on Commonwealth Avenue.

Banda, a resident of 96 Sampaguita St. in San Roque, Bagong Pag-asa, Quezon City, now faces charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple physical injuries.

Investigation showed that Banda was stationed outside the supermarket at around 5:45 p.m. Sunday when he heard a customer cry for help after a man snatched her bag.

Banda immediately chased the suspect and fired a warning shot in the air.

However, the pellets from his shotgun accidentally hit Rene Nojara, 28; Marilyn Abiada, 36; Brenda Angala, 37; Jill Canuday, 34; Jan Marinni Canuday, 10; and John Clyde Canuday, 8.

The victims were taken to the Malvar General Hospital for treatment, according to PO2 Vichen Padua of the Batasan Hills police station.

The officer in charge of the K9 Security Agency posted at the Puregold Supermarket turned Banda over to the police. He is now detained at the Batasan Hills police station.

Tondo killings not a case of double suicide, says cop

By Allison W. Lopez

POLICE HAVE RULED OUT THE double suicide angle in the case of two women who were found dead inside a house in Tondo, Manila last week.

Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling of the Manila Police District homicide division told the INQUIRER the other day that Gretchen Sangalang, a nursing student, killed her friend, Kaycie Caringal, 20, before shooting herself in the head.

Their bodies were found beside each other in Sangalang's home on Yangco Street, Tondo on Feb. 27.

Caringal was shot in the forehead while Sangalang had a gunshot wound in the right temple.

According to Yanquiling, there was enough evidence to show that Sangalang shot her friend first before she killed herself.

He added that only Sangalang was found positive for powder burns.

An investigation showed that the victims, whom relatives said were best riends, arrived at around 3 p.m. in Sangalang's house and locked themselves inside her room on the second floor.

Two hours later, Caringal's boyfriend, Luis Miraflor, and her guardian, Dr. Celia Segismundo, forcibly opened the door and saw the victims' bodies sprawled on the floor.

Never marry a woman more intelligent than you

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE WOMAN OFFICIAL OF THE Bureau of Customs featured in this space last Saturday would have been charged with bigamy by prosecutors at the Department of Justice.

But somebody very influential intervened, according to my DOJ sources.

Bigamy is a crime where the respondent marries for the second time at the time when the first marriage is still existing.

It's a crime committed mostly by men in this country. Seldom is it committed by women; hence, this bit of newsy gossip.

(Personally, I wouldn't have given the story a second look since I'm not a saint myself).

The customs official is married to a minor functionary at the customs bureau who is the complainant. It was he who approached me through a third party. *Masyado raw naagrabiyado si Manong.*

* * *

Here's an unsolicited piece of advice for men planning to marry their fiancées who are much more intelligent than they are: Think twice, especially if you're the macho type.

If you and your fiancée are in the same profession or calling, chances are she'll overtake you by a mile over the years.

She'll surely outgrow you because you're *bobo*. And when that happens, love flies out the window.

I know somebody whose wife has gone up the success ladder while he has not progressed since they got married years ago.

Result: Since the guy can't separate from his wife like most of his kind who have enough pride do, he takes it out on other people.

* * *

At this point in the senatorial campaign, candidate Alan Peter Cayetano is a sure winner, and he owes his imminent victory to none other than the First Gentleman, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Mr. Arroyo is Cayetano's No. 1 endorser and public relations (PR) man.

Cayetano, Taguig-Pateros congressman, should not forget to thank Mr. Arroyo for a job well done when he's already in the Senate.

* * *

The claim of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon that soldiers were deployed in Metro Manila slums upon the request of local government leaders to "curb drugs and to stop the recruitment of groups always seen on the streets" is a big slap on Philippine National Police chief Oscar Calderon.

What Esperon is saying is that the police could not stop the peddling of illegal drugs and street crimes, that's why the military had to be called. It means that the PNP is useless, which it really is under Calderon, if you ask me.

* * *

Two tabloid columnists and a well-known radio commentator have criticized Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and PNP chief Calderon for their alleged inaction against a "jueteng" lord in Isabela.

The columnists and commentator even identified the jueteng lord. He is a politician.

This politician ranks high in a dominant political party. He is also a top lieutenant of a very influential personality.

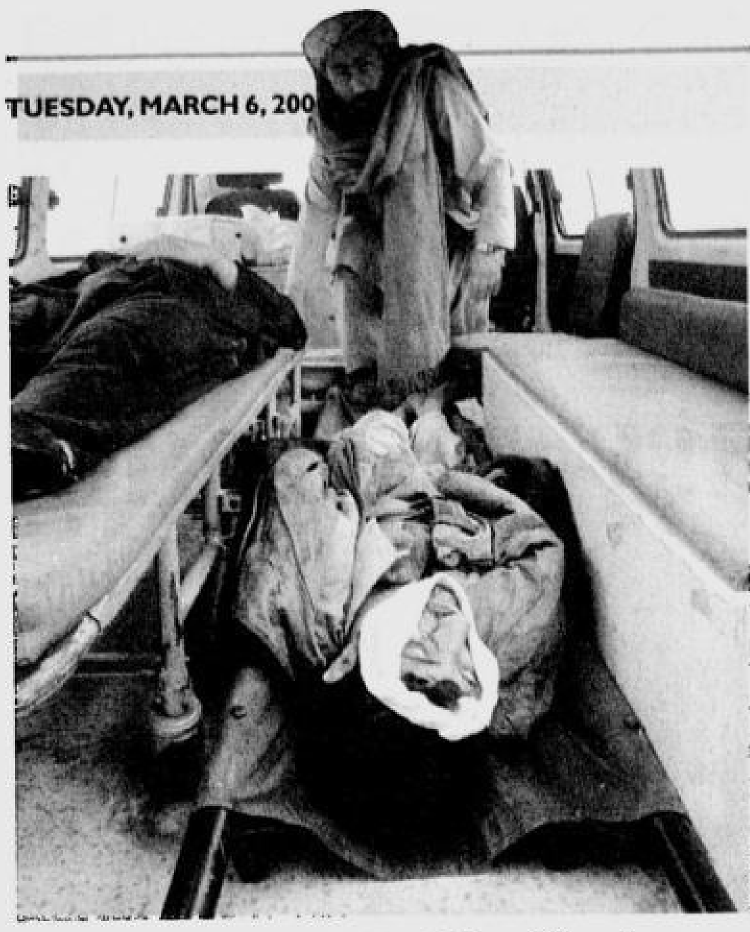
That's the reason why jueteng can never be stopped in Isabela.

* * *

Some military generals' wives are reportedly on a spending spree, buying real estate and expensive jewelry.

One of them was quoted as saying, "Go ahead, give me some more expensive things to buy because my husband won't be there forever."

Where did the generals' wives get all the money?



A MAN stands near two dead bodies of Afghan civilians who were allegedly killed by American soldiers after a car bombing on an American convoy March 4. AP

US troops fire on Afghan road, leaving 16 civilians dead, 24 hurt

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN—US troops opened fire on a highway filled with civilian cars and bystanders on Sunday, US and Afghan officials said, in an incident that the Americans said left 16 civilians dead and 24 wounded after a suicide car bombing in eastern Afghanistan.

One American was also wounded.

The shooting sparked demonstrations, with local people blocking the highway, the main road east from the town of Jalalabad to the border with Pakistan.

There were differences in some of the accounts of the incident, with the Americans saying that the civilians were caught in crossfire between the troops and militants, and Afghan witnesses and some authorities blaming the Americans for indiscriminately shooting at civilian vehicles after the explosion.

The US military said that the unit came under fire after a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden car near their convoy "as part of a complex ambush involving enemy small-arms fire from several directions."

The US troops, who were patrolling near Jalalabad airfield, returned fire and the civilians were killed and wounded in the crossfire during the battle, according to a statement from the military press office at Bagram air base, near Kabul.

A hospital official, who asked not to be named, said all the wounded were suffering from bullet wounds and not shrapnel from the bomb explosion.

Hundreds of Afghans blocked the road and threw rocks at police officers in protest afterward, with some demonstrators shouting "Death to America! Death to Karzai!" a reference to President Hamid Karzai, The Associated Press reported.

Among the dead on Sunday morning were a woman and two children in their early teens, said Dr. Ajmal Pardez, the provincial director of health, speaking by telephone from the Jalalabad city hospital. He said the hospital received 10 dead and 25 wounded people from the incident, with four people in critical condition, he said.

The incident was the second involving a high number of civilian casualties in under a week.

On Tuesday, some 16 Afghans were killed in a Taliban suicide bombing at a US military base near Kabul that was being visited by US Vice President Dick Cheney.

At least three foreign nationals—two Americans and a South Korean — were also killed.

Insurgent commanders have vowed to conduct a new wave of suicide attacks this year as part of their Al-Qaida-style campaign against the US-backed government that was installed after the Taliban regime was toppled in 2001.

The British soldiers were killed in a rocket attack in Helmand province, the defence ministry in London said, taking to 50 the British soldiers serving in Afghanistan that have been killed since 2001. *NYT, AFP*

US Democrats move closer to rewriting Iraq resolution

WASHINGTON—THE US DEMOCRATIC-led Senate is moving closer to rewriting the measure that paved the way for US President George W. Bush to invade Iraq nearly four years ago, two top Democratic lawmakers said on Sunday.

The move would not repeal the Senate's 2002 vote authorizing the war, but instead limit the mission of US troops to focus on counterterrorism efforts such as protecting Iraq's borders, said Sen. Carl Levin, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"It will not be combat in the middle of Baghdad. It will be a transition to a more limited mission of supporting the Baghdad army training and logistics," the Michigan Democrat told CBS' "Face the Nation."

He added the measure, expected to come up this week, would be binding.

Democrats, who took over both houses of Congress in January, have been searching for a way to express their displeasure with Bush's plan to increase US troops in Iraq.

They have largely rejected the idea of withholding funds for the war.

An earlier bid to pass a nonbinding resolution rebuking the troop buildup stalled, but Levin and Sen. Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said this new effort is gaining greater support among nearly all Democrats.

"We are coming to a very broad consensus, and that consensus...is this: That we ought to change the mission," Schumer, vice chair of the Senate Democratic Conference, told ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos." "We want to change it, to have a much more narrow focus."

The new measure is unlikely to win over many supporters of the war, most of whom have urged Congress to continue backing Bush's efforts. It is also unclear whether the US House of Representatives would follow the Senate's lead.

Connecticut Independent Sen. Joseph Lieberman, who has staunchly supported the Iraq invasion, told CBS that the resolution made no sense.

The former Democrat echoed concerns from Republican lawmakers who want to give Bush's plan time to work. *Reuters*

Protests in E. Timor after raid on army rebel

EAST Timorese women show their sympathy to Major Alfredo Reinado by showing his picture in Dili, March 5. AFP

DILI—THOUSANDS OF ANGRY supporters of East Timor rebel leader Alfredo Reinado burnt tyres and threw stones in the capital on Monday to protest against a raid by international troops on the fugitive's hideout.

Reinado, who led a revolt that plunged the fledgling nation into chaos last year, escaped Saturday's raid on his Same base by an Australian-led international peacekeeping forces in which four people were killed.

Supporters gathered in the heart of Dili, shouting "Long Live Alfredo," and denounced President Xanana Gusmao, who ordered security forces to arrest Reinado following accusations the former army major led a raid on a police post and made off with 25 automatic weapons and ammunition last month.

Armed peacekeepers patrolled the streets and tried to disperse the crowds, but Reinado's supporters said they would not call off their protest until Gusmao withdrew his arrest order.

"You better go back to your country instead of making people suffer," said one of Reinado's angry supporters, pointing to Australian peackeeping troops.

Streets emptied as international police moved to secure the city and protesters blocked roads with wrecked cars, preventing government officials from going to work, a witness said.

"It's nothing that hasn't been anticipated and it's certainly nothing that can't be responded to," Alison Cooper, a spokesperson for the UN mission in East Timor, told Australian radio.

Troops are still searching for Reinado, who has been on the run since he escaped from jail in East Timor's capital Dili in August along with 50 other inmates. He has denied any of his men were killed in the raid.

After Saturday's raid, Gusmao urged Reinado to surrender, saying the government would treat him with respect. But Reinado has said he will not surrender to international troops.

"I will only surrender to the law, not to any international power," Reinado told Reuters on Saturday. "I will not surrender for the president and prime minister's interest. I will surrender only for the peoples' interest."

Australia, which has 800 troops in East Timor, said Reinado was a threat East Timor's security and should surrender.

"It is preferable that that threat be neutralized. But the objective obviously is to take him into custody," Prime Minister John Howard told Australian television.

Reinado has made several public appearances since the escape. *Reuters*

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid Procurement of Service Vehicles

1. The Commission on Audit intends to apply the sum of Two Million Six Hundred Sixty Two Thousand Six Hundred Forty Two Pesos (P2,662,642.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of three (3) units Service Vehicles, with the following specifications:

   AUV, 4-cylinder diesel engine; 2.5 L direct injection turbo charged; 5-speed manual transmission; rear wheel drive; power-assist steering; dual air conditioning system with independent switch control, AM/FM Audio System, CD Player with four (4) speakers, power door lock and windows; brake system - front disc and rear drum. R15 tires and mag wheels; company rust-proofing with mudguards, standard tools with early warning device (EWD), seat cover, tint and matting.

   Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the Bid opening.
2. Interested Bidders may obtain a complete set of Bidding Documents starting March 7, 2007 to April 2, 2007, upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P 5,000.00) from the BAC Secretariat, c/o Ms. Mila R. Peñas, Procurement Division, COA Central Office, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.
3. The Commission on Audit will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on March 21, 2007, 2:00 pm at the BAC Office, Room 102, Ground Floor, Former SAADO Building, COA Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.
4. Deadline for the submission of Bids shall be on April 3, 2007, 2:00 pm at BAC Office, Room 102, Ground Floor former SAADO Building, COA Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. Immediately after the deadline, bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
5. The Bids and Awards Committee of the Commission on Audit reserves the right to reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby inurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **ARCADIO B. CUENCO, JR.**
Assistant Commissioner
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--March 6, 2007)

British royals may be called in Diana inquest

LONDON—THE JUDGE INVESTIGATING Princess Diana's death looks set on Monday to decide who will be witnesses at the inquest, raising the extraordinary possibility of the British royal family being summoned to the stand.

Mohamed al Fayed, whose son Dodi died alongside Diana in a Paris car crash 10 years ago, wants to call Diana's ex-husband Prince Charles and her ex-father-in-law the Duke of Edinburgh as witnesses.

The multimillionaire owner of the luxury Harrods department store, who is convinced the couple were murdered, won a major legal challenge last week when London's High Court ruled that the inquest should be heard before a jury.

A three-year British police investigation ruled at the end of last year that the crash was an accident and not part of an elaborate murder plot as Fayed claims.

The British inquiry backed a French probe which concluded that the driver, a Fayed employee, was to blame because he was drunk, under the influence of antidepressants and driving too fast. Fayed has rejected both British and French findings.

At Monday's preinquest hearing, coroner Elizabeth Butler-Sloss will be deciding the venue for the inquest, how the jury is picked and what witnesses will be called.

Lawyers for the royal family are expected to resist strongly any calls for Charles and his father to be called.

If they do have to take the stand at the inquest due to start in May, that could rival the media frenzy that surrounded the trials in the United States of Michael Jackson and O.J. Simpson.

Fayed said in a statement after last week's ruling, "The jury must now be allowed to hear the entirety of the evidence but I fear there will be attempts to keep it from them. If so, that will be yet another battle I will have to fight."

But he could still have his day in court creating political dynamite after the London High court ruling. *Reuters*

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on March 22, 2007, 2:00 p.m., 12th Floor, Suite 5, Executive Lounge of the DBP Head Office, Sen.Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE NO.	DESCRIPTION	AREA (sq.m.)	LOCATION	Minimum Bid
REAL ESTATE				
METRO MANILA				
CWB-1a	Residential-industrial lot (TCT No V-57731) with imp.	1,000	Tugatog St., Veinte Reales, Valenzuela City	P 3,134,000.00
CWB-1b	Residential-industrial lot (TCT No V-57732) with bldg & imp.	375	Tugatog St., Veinte Reales, Valenzuela City	P 1,183,900.00
BULACAN				
AM-RT-01	Residential-industrial lot (TCT No T-121757) with 1-storey factory/shop bldg	500	599 Border Road Ext. Cordero Subd., Bo Lambakin, Marilao	P 1,594,000.00
CWB-2b	2-adjoining vacant residential lots (TCT Nos. T-422072 (M) & T-422073 (M))	300	Lot 33 & 35 Blk. 3, Carnation St., Graceville Subd., Bo. Caretas, San Jose Del Monte City	P 420,000.00
CWB-2c	2-adjoining vacant agro-residential lots (TCT Nos. T-422070 (M) & T-422071 (M))	10,000	Bo. Bulac, Sta. Maria, Bulacan	P 4,849,000.00
CAVITE				
AM-RP-02	House and lot (TCT No T-1131445)	32	Lot 8 Block 10 Philhomes Ville I Subd Toclong, Kawit	P 192,000.00
CWB-3a	Vacant residential lot (TCT T-49242)	300	Lot 37 Blk 1, Session Road, Tagaytay Monte Vista Subd., Brgy Sungay, Tagaytay City	P 1,530,000.00
DAVAO				
AM-RT-03	3-parcels of residential lots (TCT Nos T-369591, T-369590 & T-369589) with bldg & imp.	2,235	Tacunan Road, Catalunan Grande, Davao City	P 3,843,750.00
PAMPANGA				
AM JA-04	506 vacant titled residential lots	23,889	Brgy. Telebastagan, San Fernando City	P 19,111,200.00
QUEZON				
AM-JA-05	2-parcels of agro-residential lots (TCT Nos. T-20548 & T-20549) with bldg. & imp.	6,264	Bo. Comon, Infanta	P 1,200,000.00
QUIRINO				
AM-DE-06	3-parcels of agro-residential lot (TCT T-19)	73,344	Brgy. Vilamor, Cabarroguis	P 1,650,100.00
(CHATTELS - Sale on "as is where is basis")				
AM-JA-07	Various machinery and equipment for alkali-ion/electrolytic water treatment		Brgy. Natividad, Pangil, Laguna	P 6,673,000.00
AM-ML-08a	1-unit boltformer type machine, Model CD-50		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 302,000.00
AM-ML-08b	1-unit hydraulic trough & infeed thread rolling machine		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 89,100.00
AM-ML-08c	1-unit thread rolling machine, Model DG-30		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 52,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, Ground Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers: 892-1566/893-7172 or 818-9511 locals 2158/2159/2166 for Code starting with AM and 920-4781 for CWB.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI--March 6 & 7, 2007)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region V Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID FOR LEASE OF WAREHOUSING SERVICES FOR NFA REGION V

The National Food Authority, Region V, Legazpi City, invites all qualified WAREHOUSE OWNERS/OPERATORS/CONTRACTORS to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision under lease of a maximum aggregate area of 8,584 sq meters warehousing facilities for the storage of grains and other commodities, from the execution of the contract until December 31, 2007, under the following circumstances, terms and conditions:

Location	Aggregate Floor Area (square meter)	Minimum Warehouse Capacity in Bags	Approved budget for the contract (Php)
ALBAY: Legazpi City	1,450	30,000	797,500.00
Tabaco City	2,718	30,000	1,494,900.00
Camarines Sur Tigaon	1,278	20,000	702,900.00
Iriga City	1,631	20,000	897,050.00
Sorsogon: Bulan	672	30,000	369,600.00
Gubat	462	10,000	254,100.00
Irosin	373	15,000	205,150.00
TOTAL			4,721,200.00

The Schedule of the Bidding activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of eligibility requirements and with bid documents	March 5-13, 2007	8:00 AM-5:00 PM
2. Pre bid conference	March 13, 2007	10:00 AM
3. Deadline for the submission of eligibility requirements and bid proposal	March 26, 2007	9:45 AM
4. Opening of Bids	March 26, 2007	10:00 AM

The warehouse(s) should be made of concrete wall and galvanized /slab roofing, with a minimum capacity as individually specified more or less.

It should be located in a flood-free area; in the city/town proper, or outskirts/suburbs, to avoid traffic problem in the movement of the NFA stocks.

The prospective bidder must have a single largest contract completed within the last 3 years and similar to the contract to be bid whose value adjusted to current prices must be at least fifty (50%) percent of the ABC.

Application forms, eligibility requirements and other bid documents can be secured from the RBAC Secretariat after payment of a non-transferable/non-refundable bidding fee in the amount of Php 2,000.00 together with the Mayor's permit and proof of ownership and/or authority to operate.

The venue for the pre-bidding, submission and opening of bids shall be at the NFA Regional Office, Pier, Site, Legazpi City.

Other inquiries may be addressed to the RBAC Secretariat,NFA Legazpi City with telephone numbers (052) 480-7933/480-7015/480-7085/820-0018.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF; TO WAIVE FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPTS SUCH BIDS OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. GUEVARA
RBAC Chairman

(PDI – March 6, 2007)

China sharply raises military spending

CHINESE Premier Wen Jiabao, bottom, delivers his report for the National People's Congress opening ceremony held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, March 5. AP

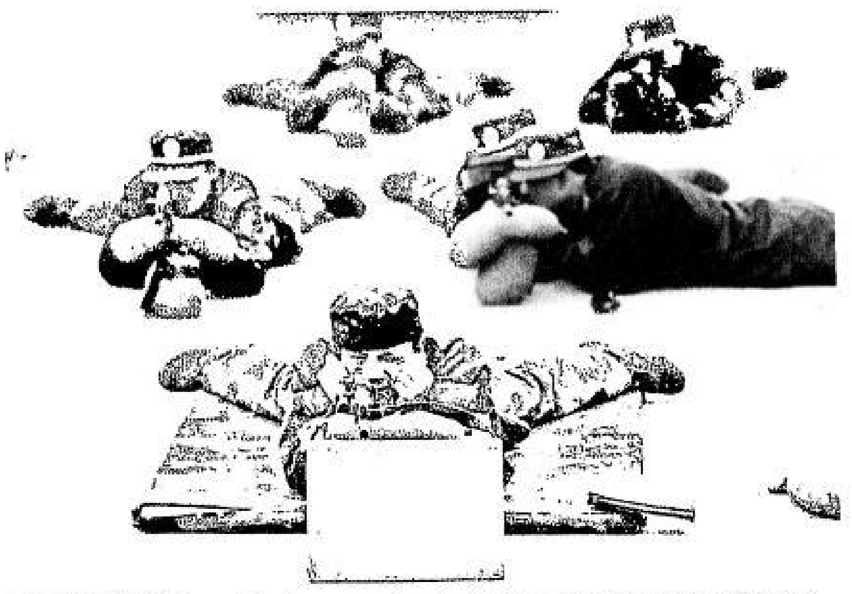
BEIJING—CHINA ANnounced on Sunday its biggest increase in defense spending in five years, a boost that quickly prompted the United States to renew its calls for more transparency from the Chinese military about the scope and intent of its continuing, rapid arms buildup.

Jiang Enzhu, a spokesperson for the National People's Congress, the Communist Party-controlled national legislature, said China's military budget would rise this year by 17.8 percent to roughly 350 billion yuan, or just under $45 billion.

"We must increase our military budget, as it is important to national security," Jiang said at a news conference. "China's military must modernize. Our overall defenses are weak."

But China's military modernization efforts have raised international concerns. In January, China set off fears of an arms race in space when it successfully tested an antisatellite missile. A month earlier, China began deploying the country's first state-of-the-art jet fighter, J-10.

These advances reflect China's intense focus on scientific and technological development, and are the fruits of more than a decade of increased military spending. China's defense outlays increased an average of about 15 percent a year from 1990 to 2005, according to the Chinese military. This year's jump is the largest one reported since military spending rose by 19.4 percent in 2002.



PARAMILITARY recruits at an army base in Nanjing, March 5. China will boost defense spending for a modern military that reflects its economic strength. REUTERS

Military analysts in the United States and Europe say that China's public military budget actually reflects only a fraction of its overall defense spending, and that the real figure is likely to be two to four times higher. Most defense analysts agree that China's military focus is to build a force that would prevail in any conflict with Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province, and also to be capable of creating a deterrent to US military intervention.

On Sunday, John D. Negroponte, the new deputy secretary of state, chose not to focus on the size of the latest budget increase, but instead emphasized that China needed to be less secretive about its military buildup.

"I think the point we would make with respect to military spending and military acquisition of various types would be the point about transparency," Negroponte said at a news conference in Beijing.

Jiang, the National People's Congress spokesperson, said that China's intentions were peaceful, and that any fears about its military ambitions were unfounded. He said China's new spending would be dedicated to increasing salaries and benefits for soldiers, as well as to overall modernization and technological upgrades. *NYT*

Premier Wen stresses 'green' growth

BEIJING—CHINA WILL DO MORE to save energy and cut pollution in 2007 while striving to keep its economy humming following four straight years of double-digit growth, Premier Wen Jiabao will say on Monday.

In his annual report to the National People's Congress, China's parliament, Wen reaffirms that Beijing will actively explore ways to invest $1.07 trillion in foreign currency reserves but offers no hints as to how it will do so.

The speech, excerpts of which were seen by Reuters, is light on politics and foreign policy.

But it underscores that Wen has made narrowing the chasm between the nation's bustling coastal cities and struggling inland villages a task that will define his administration's legacy.

"Protect social equity and justice, and let all the people together enjoy the fruits of reform and development," Wen says in his report.

China will lift spending on its restless countryside by 15.3 percent to 391.7 billion yuan in 2007, aiming to improve rural schools, hospitals and incomes as it seeks to ease social imbalances, Wen is due to say.

The need to shun growth for growth's sake and to make China's economy greener and leaner is a recurring theme in the speech.

Security was tight throughout central Beijing on Monday, with Tiananmen Square cleared and roads cordoned off to prepare for thousands of delegates converging on the Great Hall of the People to hear Wen's speech at the opening of parliament. *Reuters*

US, Nokor begin normalization talks

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES and North Korea begin landmark negotiations Monday on normalizing relations, a long-standing condition set by the reclusive communist regime for abandoning its nuclear ambitions.

But US officials cautioned that the talks in New York are only a small first step towards establishing diplomatic ties and that North Korea needs to meet a series of denuclearization benchmarks in order to end a half century of enmity between the two states.

Washington's chief negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, and his North Korean counterpart, Kim Kye-gwan, will kick off the meetings with a dinner Monday night at a New York hotel and then hold a full day of talks on Tuesday, US officials said.

The United States agreed to the negotiations with a state previously branded part of an "axis of evil" by President George W. Bush as part of a six-nation deal reached last month to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Under the multiphase Feb. 13 agreement, North Korea said it would shut down its main nuclear facility and begin steps towards giving up its nuclear weapons program in exchange for some $300 million in aid and moves towards "full diplomatic relations" with the US.

While the rapid start to those normalization talks took many by surprise and indicated a new US flexibility in dealing with Pyongyang, US officials stressed that this week's talks would yield no breakthroughs, but simply begin a diplomatic process expected to last years.

"Don't look at it as a meeting that's going to produce immediate results," said State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack.

"Nobody's going to come out the front door and wave a piece of paper with some results on it," he said, adding that the talks were more likely to focus on "organizational" issues like setting a framework and agenda for what are hoped will be ongoing discussions.

But observers of Bush administration foreign policy said this week's meetings turned an important page for Washington.

"In and of itself, the meeting Monday is historic," said Joseph Ciricione, a North Korea and nonproliferation expert at the American Progress Institute.

"It's extremely important for the content and symbolism of the meeting, but even more important as a mechanism for keeping the momentum going towards implementation of the (Feb. 13) agreement," he said.

North Korea, one of the world's most isolated states, has for years demanded direct talks with the United States on security guarantees and improved relations as a condition for negotiating on its nuclear program.

Bush long rejected the demand, choosing instead to deal with Pyongyang only in the framework of six-nation negotiations. *AFP*

Technology makes possible getting more oil from old fields

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA—THE Kern River oil field, discovered in 1899, was revived when Chevron engineers here started injecting high-pressured steam to pump out more oil. The field, whose production had slumped to 10,000 barrels a day in the 1960s, now has a daily output of 85,000 barrels.

And in Texas, Exxon Mobil expects to double the amount of oil it extracts from its Means field, which dates back to the 1930s. Exxon, like Chevron, will use three-dimensional imaging of the underground field and the injection of a gas—in this case, carbon dioxide—to flush out the oil.

Within the last decade, technology advances have made it possible to unlock more oil from old fields, and, at the same time, higher oil prices have made it economical for companies to go after reserves that are harder to reach. With plenty of oil still left in familiar locations, forecasts that the world's reserves are drying out have given way to predictions that more oil can be found than ever before.

In a wide-ranging study published in 2000, the US Geological Survey estimated that ultimately recoverable resources of conventional oil totaled about 3.3 trillion barrels, of which a third has already been produced. More recently, Cambridge Energy Research Associates, an energy consultant, estimated that the total base of recoverable oil was 4.8 trillion barrels. That higher estimate—which Cambridge Energy says is likely to grow—reflects how new technology can tap into more resources.

There is still a minority view, held largely by a small band of retired petroleum geologists and some members of Congress, that oil production has peaked, but the theory has been fading.

Typically, oil companies can only produce one barrel for every three they find. Two usually are left behind, either because they are too hard to pump out or because it would be too expensive to do so. Going after these neglected resources, energy experts say, represents a tremendous opportunity.

"Ironically, most of the oil we will discover is from oil we've already found," said Lawrence Goldstein, an energy analyst at the Energy Policy Research Foundation, an industry-funded group. "What has been missing is the technology and the threshold price that will lead to a revolution in lifting that oil." *NYT*

CLINTON AP

OBAMA AFP

Clinton, Obama vie for black voters

SELMA, ALABAMA—US DEMOCRATIC presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama took to separate church pulpits here Sunday, using a civil rights commemoration to battle for support among the country's crucial black electorate.

Speaking at churches less than a block apart, Clinton and Obama both credited the seminal Selma, Alabama, march against racial segregation 42 years ago with opening the door to their own political careers, as they vie for the Democratic nomination next year.

"I'm here because somebody marched. I'm here because you all sacrificed for me," said Obama, who hopes to become the nation's first black president.

For her part, Clinton, explaining that the movement opened doors to women in many areas as well, said: "I know where my chance came from, and I am grateful to all of you, who gave it to me."

They then laid aside the already-growing enmity between their campaigns, and—together with Hillary's husband, former president Bill Clinton—led thousands of people in a symbolic march across Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge, where state troops and police in 1965 brutally beat hundreds of demonstrators marching for voting rights for disenfranchised blacks.

With the brutality, shown nationwide on television, turning into a national scandal, later that year president Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act to ensure blacks were no longer prevented from voting.

Obama won standing ovations as he paid homage in his church speech to the "giants" who led the civil rights movement.

The son of a Kenyan father and a white American mother, he sought to answer skeptics who doubt that he understands the experience of African-Americans.

He credited the civil rights struggle with creating the circumstances which allowed his parents to flout racist conventions in their mixed-race marriage.

"Not only is my career the result of the work of the men and women who we honor here today, my very existence might not have been possible had it not been for some of the folks here today," he said to an overflow audience including major figures from the civil rights era.

"So don't tell me I don't have a claim on Selma, Alabama...I'm here because somebody marched. I'm here because you all sacrificed for me. I stand on the shoulders of giants," said Obama.

He described discrimination his Kenyan grandfather faced under British colonial rule, when he was called a "houseboy" even as an elderly man working as a cook.

But he said the fight for equal rights in the United States sent "a shout across the oceans so that my grandfather began to imagine something different for his son." *AFP*

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Wizards post bizarre victory over Warriors /A23

Reyes, 5 others reach World 8-Ball last 32

THROUGH: Efren "Bata" Reyes, biggest Filipino name to advance

POOL MAESTRO EFREN "BAta" Reyes towed six more Filipinos in the round of 32 Sunday of the third World 8-Ball Championship at the Al Bashton Hall in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.

Reyes, dubbed "The Magician" in the international pool circuit, nipped Bashar Hussein of Qatar, 8-5, to advance along with Lee Van Corteza, Joven Bustamante, Mario Tolentino, Joybe Vicente and Al James Ortega.

Corteza, the top player of Negros Billiard Stable, crushed Issa Al Boloshi of UAE, 8-1, while Bustamante produced the day's shocker by ousting former world 9-ball champion Oliver Ortmann of Germany, 8-3.

Tolentino downed Nasser Al Mujebel of Kuwait, 8-3; Vicente crushed Rizandro Arrieta of Venezuela, 8-2; and Ortega nipped Karl Boyes of Great Britain, 8-6.

All told, the Philippines produced 10 qualifiers in the round of 32 following the earlier advance of reigning world 9-ball champion Ronnie Alcano, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Dennis Orcollo and overseas Filipino worker Elvis Calasag.

But as a result, there will be two all-Filipino duels in the race for the top 16 slots Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) with Reyes, playing under the banner of Puyat Sports, paired against Ortega and Calasang against Vicente.

In other matches, it will be Joven Bustamante against Farhad Shaverdi of Iran, Orcollo against Ben Nunan of Australia, Alcano against Thorsten Hohmann of Germany, Tolentino against Niels Feijen of the Netherlands, Django Bustamante against Thomas Engert of Germany and Corteza against Nick Van Den Berg also of Netherlands.

Puyat, commenting on the progress of the tournament so far, said knockout matches between Filipinos were expected since they had the most number of qualifiers. "I just hope a Filipino would win there again," he added.

The acknowledged Filipino billiards "godfather" recalled that in the inaugural 2004 edition of the tournament, the Filipinos produced a 1-2-3-4 finish through Reyes, Marlon Manalo, Alex Pagulayan and Django Bustamante.

The other qualifiers are defending champion Wu Chia-ching and Hui Kai-hsia of Taiwan, Ralf "Kaiser" Souquet, Erik Hjorliefson of Canada, Marcus Chamat of Sweden, Darren Appleton of Britain, Fabio Petroni of Italy, Satoshi Kawabata and 17-year-old Hisashi Kusano of Japan.

Two OFWs, Jobert Panga and Joven Alba, failed to progress, however. Panga yielded to former world champion Ralf "Kaiser" Souquet of Germany (8-2) while Alba bowed to Ben Nunan of Austria (8-4). *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

OVERCOMING BALDNESS

THINK-A-HEAD

No man likes being bald. He may try to ignore it, but deep inside, there's a nagging feeling that life has been unfair. Why me? Why have I gone bald when my friends haven't? Many men sadly accept looking older, being called "Baldie," feeling not so attractive to the opposite sex and putting up with the other handicaps baldness brings – both socially and career wise.

Other men refuse to accept baldness and look for a way out – this is when a wrong decision can lead to an even worse state of frustration and despair. Before you do anything about baldness, read the answers to these most asked questions.

Q. I DON'T LIKE BEING BALD – WHAT CAN I DO?
A. There are basically two ways to go. Some men opt for a surgical hair transplant. Others for the non-surgical alternative. When making the decision there's one essential rule: *THINK-A-HEAD!* - it's not only the immediate results that are so important, it's what your head is going to look like in a few years.

Q. OK, SO WHAT ABOUT SURGICAL TRANSPLANTS?
A. Some say transplants have come a long way since the early days, others say they haven't come far enough. Basically, the surgical process involves taking donor hair from elsewhere on the recipient's head and transplanting it to the balding areas.

Q. DOES TRANSPLANTED HAIR CONTINUE TO GROW?
A. If the surgery has been performed well, the transplanted hair will continue to grow, as it did before it was moved.

Q. CAN ANY BALD MAN HAVE A TRANSPLANT?
A. It's not really possible for a man with advanced baldness because he simply would not have sufficient donor hair to cover his large bald area. Transplants do not increase the number of hairs on a man's head, it's just a case of redistributing them. Transplants are excellent for filling in smaller areas or adding extra hair to thinning parts where there is not expected to be further hairloss.

Q. ARE THERE ANY PROBLEMS WITH TRANSPLANTS?
A. For men whose baldness will not advance further, there seems little downside to having a transplant.

Q. BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF I CONTINUE TO GO BALD?
A. For those whose hairloss continues to advance, there can be significant problems. While the transplanted hair will carry on growing, his other hair becomes thin in contrast as he progressively goes bald. He can have further transplants, but it's likely donor hair will become insufficient as the donor areas do not re-grow hair. The result might be patches of thicker-growing hair among thinning and sparser hair – and this won't take long to happen. The ensuing odd appearance of the man's head can cause him further embarrassment and stress. Speed of hairloss varies, but for most it takes just a few short years from thinning to full-blown baldness.

If a man suffers from Male Pattern Baldness, which usually strikes when he's in his early twenties or thirties, his hairloss will likely continue until he's bald. This is where the catch-phrase *THINK-A-HEAD!* comes into play. Think what your head will look like in a few years after surgical transplanting – will you want to go out in public?

Q. I DON'T WANT THAT RISK, SO WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?
A. The non-surgical alternative is TCR or Transdermal Cosmetic Reconstruction. It's a super-fine synthetic skin with hair seen to be actually growing from it, which is then bonded to your scalp.

Q. IS TCR FOR ANYONE, NO MATTER HOW BALD HE MIGHT BE?
A. Yes, this advanced system is ideal for any state of hairloss and baldness, even for those with only a small amount of hair at the back and sides – the sort of baldness which is really not suitable for a transplant.

Q. HOW REAL IS TCR, WILL IT LOOK GENUINE?
A. TCR is real, natural hair, which looks and feels as if it's growing from your scalp. TCR cannot be distinguished from your own hair, even by touching. You are not "wearing" it, it's part of you.

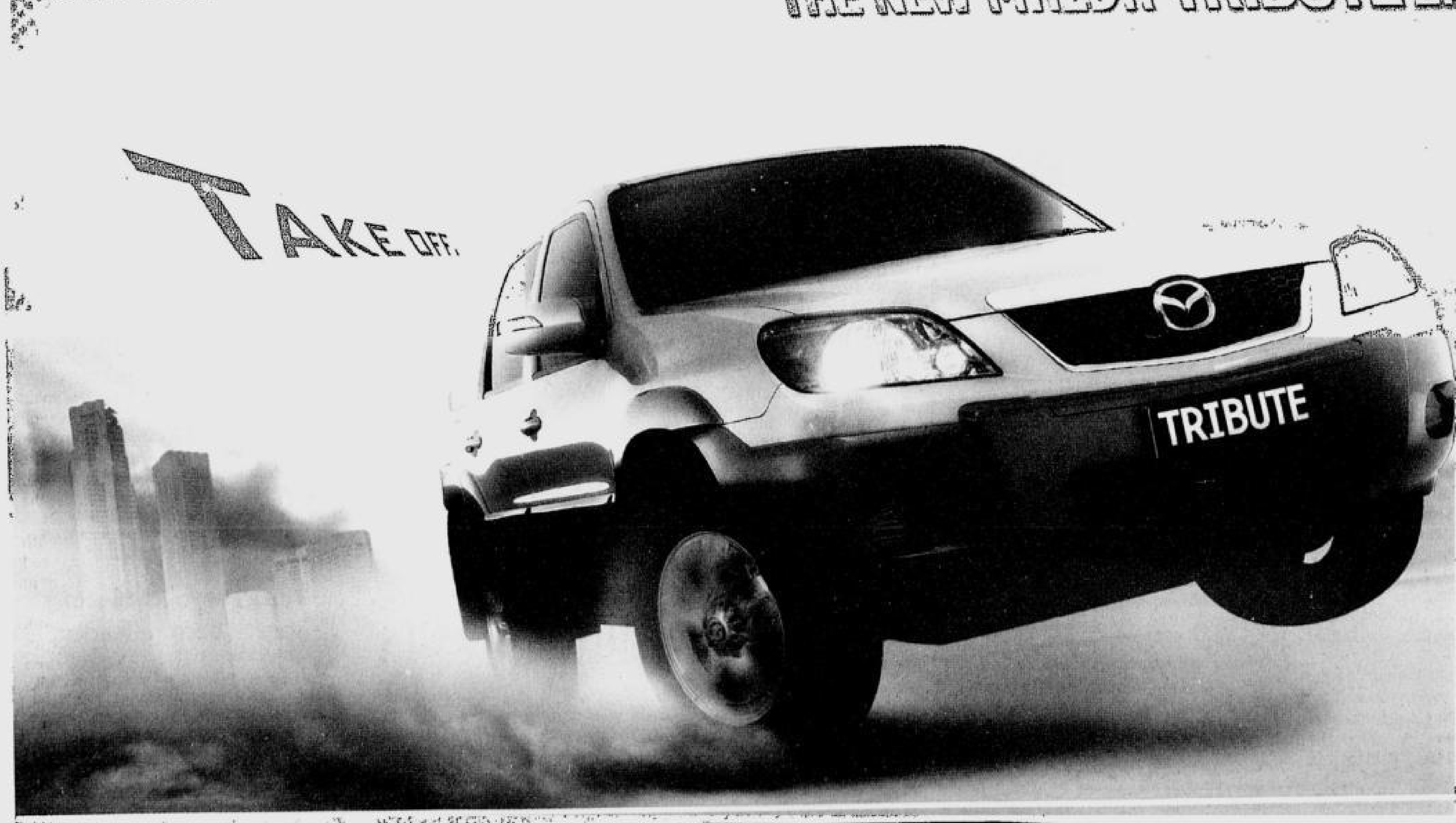
Q. DOES TCR REQUIRE SPECIAL CARE?
A. To keep TCR perfect, you need only visits to the stylist every two or three weeks, just as any man does for the cutting and styling of his hair. As you get older, your TCR can be subtly aged and grayed, just as your full head of hair would have looked had you not lost any.

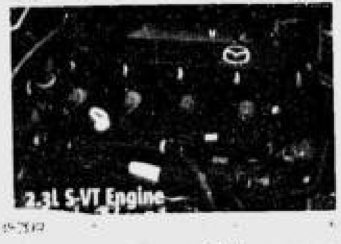
Q. IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE – WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?
A. There are no problems. You can do anything with TCR, it's your new full head of hair. It feels totally natural on your head – you're not aware of it. The only times you'll be reminded that you're no longer bald is when you look in the mirror and how others react to you – remember, you're going to look years younger!

Q. IS TCR AVAILABLE IN MANILA?
A. Yes, it's available in Manila at Svenson, the hair replacement specialists.

Q. IS TCR SUITABLE FOR ME?
A. To find out if your scalp condition and skin type are suitable for the TCR procedure, book a no-cost TCR fact-finding consultation by calling 892-4247.

ADVT





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2nd Olympic Festival NL leg gets under way in Vigan

FROM left: Robert Aventajado, Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Frank Elizalde, chair International Olympic Committee, and Vigan City Vice Mayor Francisco Ranchez light Philipine Olympic Festival torch in Vigan. RYAN LIM

By June Navarro

VIGAN CITY—THE SEARCH FOR THE NEXT generation of national athletes officially started yesterday as the 2nd Philippine Olympic Festival kicked off its Northern Luzon qualifier with an elaborate opening rites at Quirino Stadium here.

About 3,000 athletes from 13 cities and provinces in central and northern Luzon will dispute 200 gold medals at stake in 17 disciplines, including 11 Olympic sports, and slots in the national championships in October.

POC chair Robert Aventajado hopes to discover talents from this year's POF who will be trained in time for the 2012 Olympics in London.

"Ten athletes from five elite sports will be named and their specialized training overseas will be shouldered and supervised by the Olympic Solidarity Movement," said Aventajado, who will form a committee designed to identify the athletes after the national championships in Manila on Oct. 1-7.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, who graced yesterday's opening ceremony hosted by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, will head the committee together with Aventajado.

Olympic-bound national sports associations will be required to submit two candidates for the OSM privilege after the five regional qualifying tournaments and the national championships.

Aventajado said the POF was patterned after the Australian sports festival which discovered 18 athletes 17 years old and younger who first saw action in the 2000 Sydney Games. Five athletes from the group went on to win gold medals in the 2004 Athens Olympics.

"In our case, athletes 15 years old or younger are in the priority list, so by the time the London Olympics come, these athletes are already in the peak of their careers," he said.

Host Ilocos Sur is fielding a 400-strong contingent, Baguio City has 298 delegates, Nueva Ecija 189, Cagayan Valley 136 and Angeles City 105.

Athletes and officials from Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, Benguet, Ifugao, Olongapo City, Bulacan, La Union and Tarlac will also vie for a rare chance of qualifying to the London Olympiad.

Competition in athletics, arnis, baseball, chess, football, gymnastics, sepak takraw and table tennis will begin today. Basketball games opened at the University of Northern Philippines gym yesterday.

Gov. Singson ran the final leg of the torch relay and then enshrined the flame in a cauldron.

Compton 'the import' fulfills a dream

By Musong R. Castillo

WITH LIGHT BLUE EYES, SLIGHTLY BLOND hair and a perfect nose, there's no mistaking Alex Compton as a foreigner.

Until, of course, you hear him talk— about basketball, the country, and the chance he got to finally play in the PBA and against Johnny Abarrientos—in Filipino. It makes him more Filipino than many half-breeds in the league.

"Johnny A was the first guy I ever heard of about the Philippines," Compton said Sunday night, a few minutes after his first PBA game. "*Karangalan kong makalaro si Johnny* (It's an honor to play against Johnny)."

The 32-year-old, full-blooded American was born in the Philippines but went back to the United States when he was six months old. He has called this country home and lived the life of his dreams.

"*Pangarap ko talagang mag-pro sa ibang bansa* (I've always dreamt of becoming a pro overseas)," Compton said.

Always thinking of himself as a Filipino, Compton's curiousity about his country of birth was pricked when Tyrell Pitts, the former PBL import who was deputy coach at Cornell University, told him "that Johnny A is better than you."

His return in 1998 coincided with the first year of the Metropolitan Basketball Association, where he suited up with the Manila Metrostars and became the league's leading figure. He won the MVP title the next year.

The MBA's disbandment was supposed to hasten his transfer to the PBA, but it actually meant the start of a frustrating period.

The pro league insisted on classifying him as an import, but at 5-foot-11 no team dared tap him as reinforcement.

Compton then contented himself playing in the PBL. And again, he proved himself a winner with Montaña.

Realizing his worth and as a concession to a new member, Compton got a special permit to play as a second import for Welcoat in the Fiesta Cup, where he hopes to provide added firepower and leadership to the young Dragons.

And, despite the Dragons' 79-81 loss to Coca-Cola Sunday night, coach Leo Austria was happy when he walked back to the locker room at the Cuneta Astrodome.

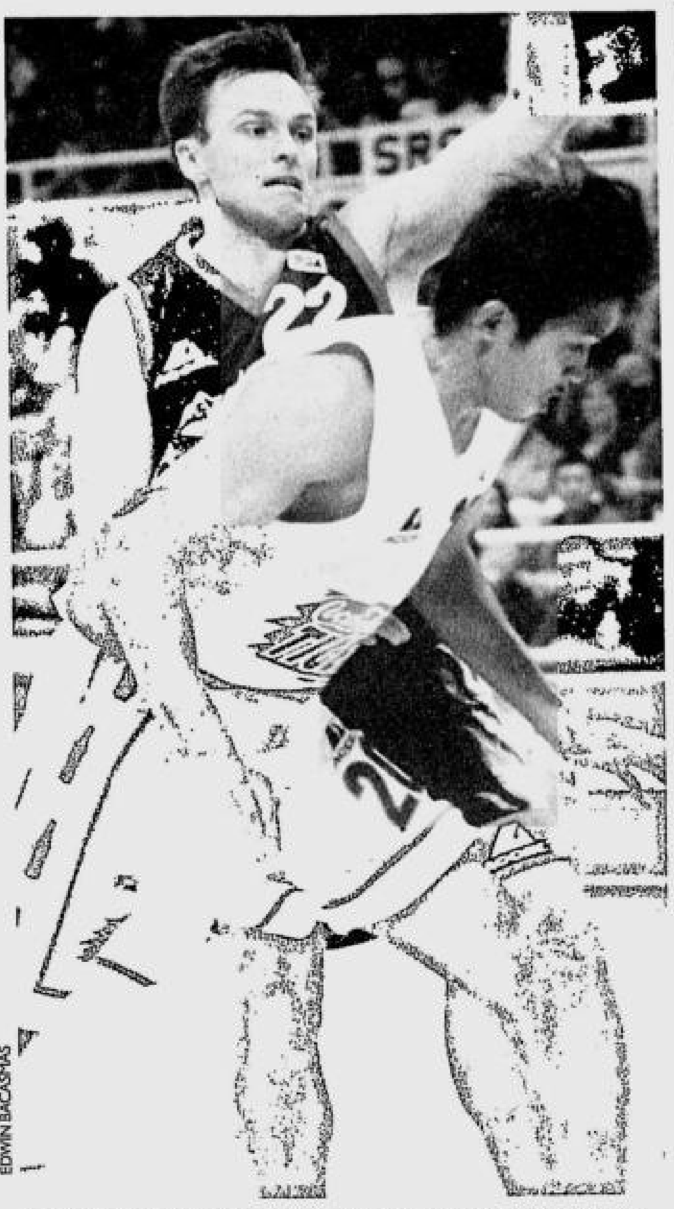
"All Alex wants is to win," Austria said smiling. "I think he was just excited and eager, that's why he struggled a bit tonight. Give him a couple of more games and he'll deliver."

"*Medyo masakit kapag hindi maganda ang laro ko, tapos talo kami* (It's pains me when I play well and we still lose)," Compton said.

Compton has knocked on the PBA doors since he first came over. He got his prayers answered, even for just this tournament.

"*Gustong-gusto ko lang maglaro* (I just want to play)," he said. "Especially here in the PBA) because the best of the best are here."

With him around, the league will never go wrong.



EDWIN BACASMAS

"HONORED": Alex Compton guards Coke's Chester Tolomia.

Taiwanese slo-pitch batters lift Pangaea Cup

POWERHOUSE CHINESE-TAIPEI SQUADS dominated the three-day Cebuana Lhuillier Pangaea Cup Slo-pitch International Tournament, emerging champion in the elite Super division and taking the "A" and Club titles as well.

Tong Hwa, winner of the 2004 Southeast Asian tournament and the 2004 and 2005 ROC President Cup, disposed of defending Super division champion Fattboyz Guzzlers, 43-25, in the finals at the Alabang Country Club grounds.

Earlier, Tong Hwa beat title sponsor Cebuana Lhuillier, 26-14, in the semifinals while Fattboyz Guzzlers clinched the other title slot at the expense of another Chinese-Taipei team, Fu Sheng, 16-12.

Cebuana Lhuillier, back-to-back Pangaea Super division titlist in 2003 and 2004, finished third this time. The team was led by Asaphil president Jean Henri Lhuillier.

At the club level, Tong Hwa's other team blasted Los Guzzlers, 29-20, in the finals to nail the "A" division title.

The well-knit Tong Hwa batters downed the Meralco Sluggers, 25-11, while Los Guzzlers edged out the Manila Gorillas, 9-6, in the semifinals.

Completing the Chinese domination was Typhoon Bombsquad's victory over the Hong Kong Turkeys, 15-5, to take the Club championship in the 3-in-1 tournament.

PACQUIAO: Training "as usual"

Manny defers US training, spars with taller foes

HE'S USED TO BATTLING TALLER FOES, but national boxing hero Manny Pacquiao is not taking any chances in his coming fight against Mexican Jorge Solis, who is over three inches taller at 5-foot-10.

Adopting an old, tested formula, Pacquiao will be sparring against two rangy boxers today as he resumes his training at the Abap Gym in Gen. Santos City under the supervision of Buboy Fernandez and Nony Neri.

Fernandez, who serves as assistant to the celebrated trainer Freddie Roach every time Pacquiao works out at Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood, has taken over Pacquiao's preparations for his defense of the WBC international super featherweight belt on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

"We will spar tomorrow," Fernandez said yesterday, pointing out that they have tapped the services of lightweight Jesar Ancajas of Davao City and super featherweight Aaron Melgarejo to simulate the fighting style of the unbeaten Solis (32 wins, 23 KOs, 2 draws).

Neri, who takes care of Pacquiao's nutritional requirements and physical conditioning, said they are employing the same regimen used by Roach in previous Pacquiao bouts.

Pacquiao did his usual three-hour gym routine yesterday at Rey Golingan's gym, minus the sparring sessions which are reserved only for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

"We are just training him as usual, using the American training style," said Neri.

Satisfied with the progress of his training, Pacquiao has reportedly decided to move his trip to the United States by another week.

Former heavyweight boxer Justin Fortune will oversee Pacquaio's training at the Wild Card Gym in place of Roach, who is busy attending to the training of Oscar De La Hoya for his May 5 date against Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

ASIAN CITIES CHESS

So superb as Tagaytay-RP nips Kazakhs, ties for lead

Standings after four rounds:

11.5 points—**Tagaytay (RP)**, Pavlodar (Kazakhstan); 11.0—Saipa (Iran); 10—Shanghai (China), Rah Ahan (Iran); 9.5—Tidewater (Iran); 8.5—Damascus (Syria); 8.0—Aleppo (Syria), Dubai (UAE); 7.5—Amman (Jordan), Sulimania (Iran), Lahore (Pakistan); 6.5—Sharjah (UAE), Tehran (Iran), Calicut (India), Colombo (Sri Lanka); 5.5—Erbil (Iraq); 2.0—Jerusalem (Palestine).

TEHRAN, IRAN—DEFENDING CHAMPION Tagaytay-RP hurlded the biggest obstacle to its title-retention bid in the 15th Asian Cities Chess Team Championship by humbling top seed and two-time winner Pavlodar (Kazakhstan), 2.5-1.5, late Sunday to gain a share of the lead after four rounds at the Eran Grand Hotel.

Wesley So shone brightest for the second-seeded Filipinos as he pulled the rug from under GM Petr Kostenko (Elo 2522) after only 33 moves of a Sicilan.

The defeat was the first in the nine-round competition for the strong team from the former Russian republic.

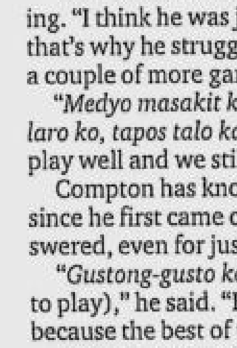
The win by the 13-year-old So enabled the Tagaytay squad backed by Mayor Bambol Tolentino team to join Kazakhstan in the lead with 11.5 points in the tournament that offers the Dubai Cup worth US$45,000 (P2.2 million) and a cash prize of US$3,000.

Third seed Saipa (Iran), bannered by GMs Ehsan Maghami Ghaem and Elshan Moradiabadi, nipped Shanghai (China), 2.5-1.5, to climb to solo third place with 11 points.

Shanghai dropped to fourth place in a tie with another Iranian entry, Rah Ahan, with 10 points.

So impressive and overpowering was So that he completed his victory in only one and a half hours, even before the majority of the spectators in this Iranian capital could arrive.

The first-year high school student at St. Francis of Assisi College-Bacoor, who is hoping to earn his GM title this year, also scored the Filipinos' lone point in a 2-2 draw with Rah Ahan in the second round early Saturday.



SO: Scalps GM

So now has 3.5 points out of a possible four for a high 87.5 percent performance rating, the highest so far among 82 players entered in the tournament.

A second win, however, slipped the Filipinos' hands when IM Oliver Dimakiling missed the decisive continuation in a rook-versus-pawn endgame and settled for a draw with fellow IM Rimat Jumabeav after 65 moves of the French.

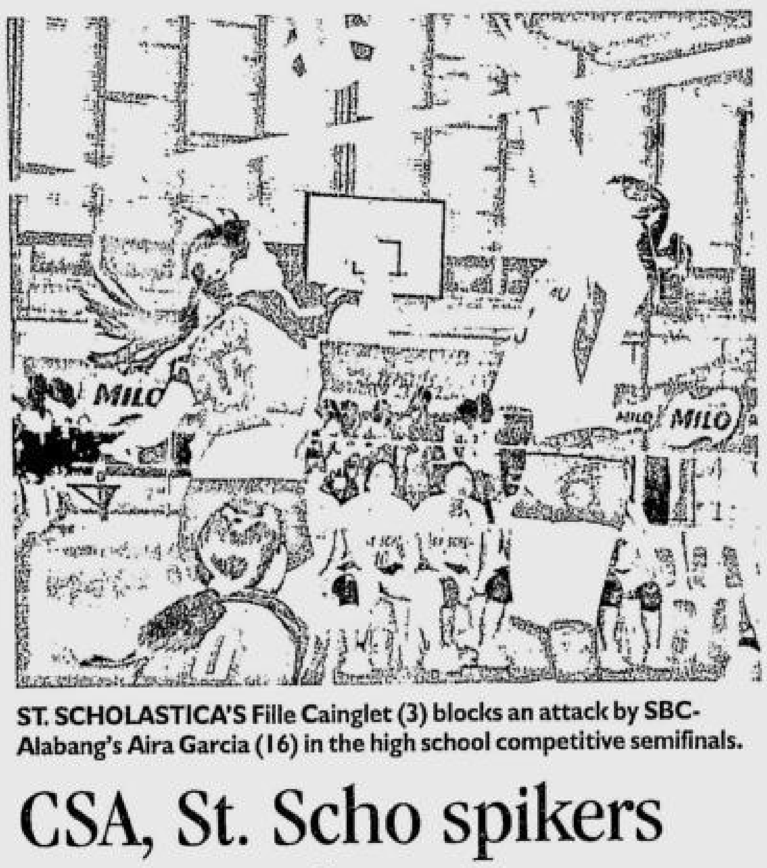
Tagaytay's top two players—GMs Mark Paragua and Rogelio Antonio Jr.—did their share and held their higher-rated foes to crucial draws.

Paragua, at 22 the country's highest-rated player with an Elo of 2573, kept his composure despite the relentless attack launched by GM Pavel Kotsur (Elo 2588) to forge a draw in 46 moves of an English Opening.

And Antonio, an enlisted personnel of the Philippine Army, battled super GM Evgeny Vladimirov (Elo 2616) on even terms before halving the point in 42 moves of a Scotch.

The Filipinos play Saipa in the fifth round at 9 a.m. Monday (2 p.m. Monday in Manila).

In other fourth round matches, Rah Ahan defeated Amman, 3-1; Aleppo nipped Dubai, 2.5-1.5; Tidewater blanked Erbil, 4-0; Damascus whipped Colombo, 3-1; Sulimania subdued Sharjah, 2.5-1.5; Tehran drew with Calicut, 2-2; and Lahore outclassed Jerusalem, 4-0.



ST. SCHOLASTICA'S Fille Cainglet (3) blocks an attack by SBC-Alabang's Aira Garcia (16) in the high school competitive semifinals.

CSA, St. Scho spikers on target for title repeats

COLEGIO SAN AGUSTIN AND ST. Scholastica's College blasted their semifinal foes on Sunday and bolstered their respective title-retention bids in the Milo-sponsored Best Center-Women's Volleyball League at the Xavier gym in Greenhills.

CSA displayed the form that made them champions in the elementary division last year in a 25-4, 25-10 crushing of Golden Sunbeams Christian School and forged a finals showdown with Miriam College, which beat St. Scholastica, in the other semifinal duel.

Not to be outdone, St. Scholastica, the defending champion in the high school competitive division, dealt San Beda-Alabang a 25-15, 25-22 beating and set up a finals duel with School of St. Anthony, which bested San Antonio de Padua College, 25-15, 16-25, 15-12.

In the elementary developmental division, Baesa Adventist ES disposed of Southville, 25-17, 25-16, and Assumption drubbed Sienna, 25-16, 25-19, to set up their own title duel.

In high school developmental play, St. Joseph-Fairview trashed New Era, 25-16, 25-23, for a slot in the finals against La Salle-Antipolo, which edged Assumption-Antipolo, 25-21, 22-25, 15-12.

SPORTSWATCH

Coach E hoops school offers fun-filled summer

PERSONALIZED, PROGRESSIVE AND SCIentific basketball training, as well as a basketball tournament and a values-enrichment camp for kids, will be offered in six venues this summer by the Coach E Basketball School. International Basketball Academy founder and PBA champion coach Eric Altamirano said classes are scheduled in Batangas City and Lipa City on April 9; La Salle-Canlubang, San Beda-Alabang and The Zone in Makati on April 10 and Manila Central University on April 11. "We're inviting all kids to learn basketball the Coach E way," said Altamirano. "It will not only be a worthwhile summer but also fun-filled one." For inquiries, call 631-1195 or 09217562639 or log-on to iba_phil@yahoo.com and www.ibaphil.net. The summer basketball tournament, set in May, is open to all schools with players in the 11-and-under division. The players will be treated to free clinics. "We also teach the important values needed to live life to the fullest," said Altamirano.

Ali urges youth to join sports, become leaders

MANILA INNER CITY DEVELOPMENT COMmittee chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza has urged the city's youth to participate in sports and become active leaders in their communities. Speaking during the recent city congress of the Youth for Life, a non-government organization also headed by Atienza, he also emphasized the need for equal access to opportunities for the youth by involving them in policy formulation and action plan implementation through continuous consultative forums. "There is a need to ensure that the integrated national youth policy is effectively addressing all youth-related concerns and meets their needs and aspirations," the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who is also the head of the Manila Sports Council, said. "That is why the Manila city government is putting premium on the youth and emphasis on the role of sports in nation-building."

REFS DECIDE OUTCOME

Wizards post bizarre victory over Warriors

NEW YORK—WASHINGTON'S GILBERT Arenas made three free throws after a technical foul was called on Golden State coach Don Nelson with less than a second to play, giving the Wizards a 107-106 win on Sunday.

Arenas had missed a shot as the game-ending buzzer sounded but officials said he had been fouled by Golden State's Mickael Pietrus just before time expired.

Nelson vigorously protested the call and was charged with a technical, giving Washington the opportunity to come back from 106-104 down. Arenas made the three free throws with 0.01 seconds on the clock to seal the win.

"That was bizarre," he told reporters after the game.

"You've got to thank the refs for that one."

Arenas, a former Golden State player, looked over at the Warriors bench and smiled before his final free throw.

"I was telling them that they just need to go ahead and go to the locker room, get on the bus." Golden State's Al Harrington said the call changed the outcome of the game.

"The technical is ridiculous because now you take the game completely away from us," he told reporters.

Steve Nash scored 23 points, 18 of them in the second half, as the Phoenix Suns held off the Los Angeles Lakers, 99-94.

The Chicago Bulls got a career-best 48 points from Ben Gordon to offset Michael Redd's 52 points in a 126-121 overtime road victory over Milwaukee.

The Boston Celtics recorded their fourth straight win, beating the Minnesota Timberwolves, 124-117, in double overtime. *Reuters*

Fiba board confirms lifting of RP ban

THE CENTRAL BOARD OF THE INTERnational basketball federation (Fiba) has approved the recognition of the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas as the duly affiliated member of the world cage body.

The approval came after the central board, meeting in Madrid Saturday, "confirmed the Secretary General's decision on the Philippines situation and the reorganization of its National Federation."

Fiba secretary general Patrick Bauman had recommended the reinstatement of the Philippines following the reorganization of the national basketball association as the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas with the election of officers during a unity meeting he personally attended in Makati City last month.

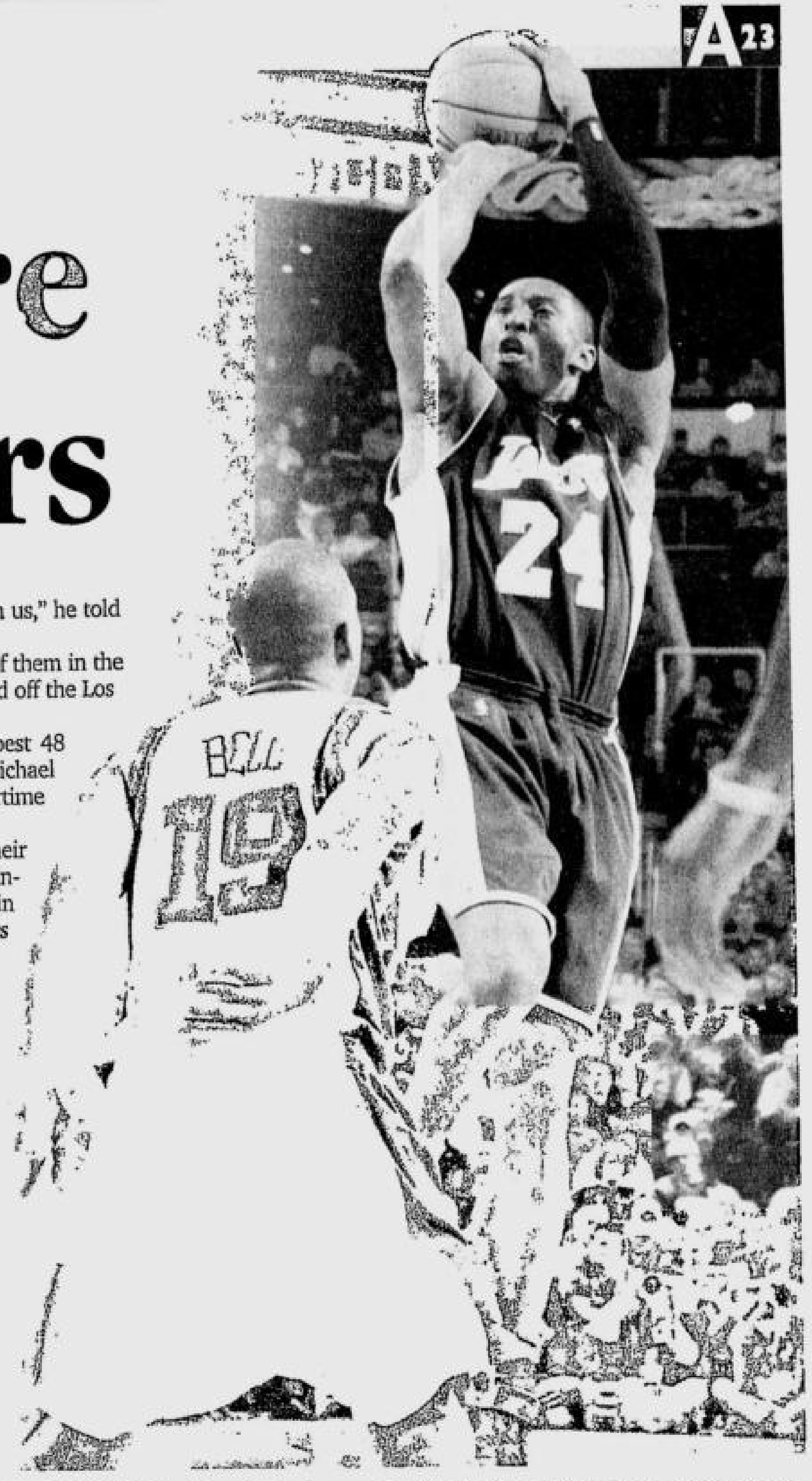
Free to compete again

Saying it has now lifted the ban on the country, the central board added "the national teams from the Philippines are therefore free to compete again in Fiba competitions starting with the Olympic qualifying in Fiba Asia."

The national team under coach Chot Reyes will first compete in the Seaba championship, possibly to be held in Manila, in May to seek one of two berths at stake for the Fiba Asia set in Japan in July.

The top two Fiba Asia finishers, outside of China, will qualify for the 2008 Beijing Olympics basketball tournament.

A copy of the minutes of the central board's Madrid meeting was furnished the Philippine Basketball Association yesterday.



THE LAKERS' Kobe Bryant shoots over the Suns' Raja Bell in their game Sunday. AFP

FG to raise funds for Olympic bets

By Marc Anthony Reyes

COUNT ME IN.

That, in effect, was the sentiment First Gentleman Mike Arroyo relayed to Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Ramirez when they discussed the proposed budget for the 2008 Beijing Olympic campaign during a meeting in Hong Kong over the weekend.

"He (Arroyo) said that he would do his best to set a meeting with the sports godfathers, including those who had helped RP sports before and those who will help for the first time," said Ramirez.

Ramirez said the target is to raise P250 million to bankroll the country's determined drive to win the first Olympic gold medal in Beijing next year, noting that the First Gentleman "didn't say no" to serving as chief RP team fund-raiser again.

Arroyo was instrumental in raising some P100 million through pledges from the country's top businessmen and corporations to finance the overseas training of the athletes who went on to give the Philippines a first ever Southeast Asian Games overall championship in Manila last year.

This time, the amount to be raised by the FG Foundation will be used to fund an estimated 55 athletes who will train extensively abroad until the Beijing Games in August next year.

Ramirez said athletes will be sent overseas for training starting April while the money is being raised.

Ramirez said that the FG Foundation wants to "have a hand" in the Olympic preparation through a team that will include the sports godfathers and will visit the training venues and monitor the athletes' progress.

The monitoring team, according to Ramirez, would be separate from the a similar group from the Philippine Olympic Committee.

"This will be the centerpiece of the government's unity effort as it was proven time and again that sports is the great unifier," added Ramirez.

The PSC chief also announced that Mr. Arroyo will soon visit Beijing to confer with Chinese sports officials and "establish goodwill" with them.

Part of Mr. Arroyo's mission is to boost the status of Filipino athletes during the games. "We want to avoid things that happened in the past where they regarded the Filipino athletes as poor and underprivileged," Ramirez added.

Ramirez said 16 months will be enough for the Olympic training since the athletes to be fielded in Beijing are "no greenhorns."

The Olympic hopefuls will come from taekwondo, boxing, beach volleyball, swimming, diving, rowing, shooting, archery, gymnastics, athletics, lawn tennis, weightlifting, wushu and fencing.

Darkness stops 4-man title playoff

PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIda—Four players parred the first hole of sudden death before darkness stopped play on Sunday to leave the Honda Classic on hold.

Unheralded Boo Weekley bogeyed the final hole of regulation to fall into the playoff with Colombian Camilo Villegas, Argentina's Jose Coceres and third-round leader Mark Wilson.

All four parred the first playoff hole—the par-five 18th—and were to return to continue the battle at the PGA National Resort and Spa on Monday morning.

Had Weekley managed to par 18 in regulation, he would have earned his first career PGA Tour win, $990,000 and a coveted two-year tour exemption.

A member of the Nationwide Tour the last four years, Weekley began the day one shot behind Wilson.

He followed all four of his birdies with eventual bogeys, including one at the last hole for a round of par 70 and a total of five-under 275.

Wilson, who has made 10 trips to Q-School, still held the lead at the turn as he overcame a double-bogey six at the sixth hole with three birdies.

But he dropped into a tie for the lead when he bogeyed the par-4 11th and also bogeyed the par-3 15th to post a 71.

Villegas fired a 4-under 66 that included birdies on the 16th and 17th. He was the only member of the quartet to avoid a bogey on the back nine.

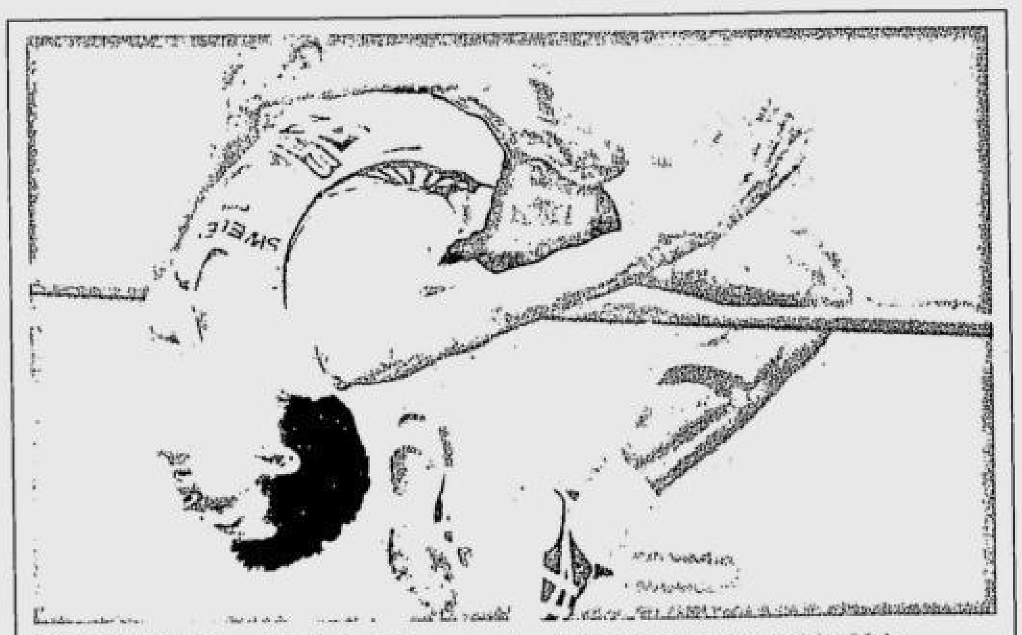
Coceres also shot a 66 but did most of his damage early, birdieing the first five holes. That streak ended with a bogey and he also bogeyed No. 14 on a quiet back nine.

Coceres has had playoff success before, the first of his two US victories coming in a five-hole playoff at the 2001 WorldCom Classic.

Early on the back nine, Wilson was caught by Australian veteran Robert Allenby, who had four birdies on the front nine.

But Allenby, who has four US victories in his career, couldn't cash in on his huge edge in experience as he bogeyed 15 and 16 en route to a 68 that dropped him back to 276, tied with Steve Stricker (69) and Tripp Isenhour (67). *AFP*

MARK Wilson: Shining after 10 trips to Qualifying School. AFP



HIGH JUMPER: Swedish Stefan Holm competes in the high jump final of the 29th European Athletics Indoor Championships in Birmingham on Sunday. Holm won. AFP

Darchinyan sad after beaten foe falls into coma

MELBOURNE—AUSTRALIAN FLYWEIGHT Vic Darchinyan has been unable to celebrate his latest victory after his Mexican opponent, Victor Burgos, had a blood clot removed from his brain following their 12-round battle on Saturday.

DARCHINYAN

The 32-year-old Burgos was stretchered from the ring at the end of their IBF world title bout in Los Angeles. Burgos absorbed a string of withering punches during the fight as Darchinyan improved his career record to 28-0.

An inconsolable Darchinyan said he had wanted to visit Burgos in hospital but his scheduled flight back to Sydney had prevented him from doing so.

"Of course I was unhappy, I wish he's going to be all right," Darchinyan told Australian media.

"Yesterday and today cannot be a celebration, I told them (fans) I don't want it.

"We mentioned the guy's name and everyone prayed for him and wished him good luck."

Burgos remained in a medically induced coma to further reduce the brain swelling following the surgery, promoter Don King Productions said in a statement.

Burgos had shown signs of movement "that could only be described as positive" since the surgery, it said.

The fight was stopped two minutes into the 12th round and Burgos temporarily lost consciousness on his stool before he was taken out of the ring in a stretcher.

Burgos' wife, family and friends were at his bedside at the UCLA Medical Center. *Reuters*

Hewitt snares Channel Open

HEWITT celebrates after scoring the match point against Melzer during the final. AFP

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—SECond-seeded Australian Lleyton Hewitt defeated fourth-seeded Austrian Jurgen Melzer, 6-4, 7-6 (12/10), here Sunday to claim the $416,000 Tennis Channel Open.

Hewitt, the former world No. 1 who is now ranked 20th in the world, captured his 26th career title. He also extended his run of seasons with at least one title to 10 straight, the best such streak among active players.

Hewitt improved on his performance here last year, when he finished runner-up to American James Blake.

"It is a big win," Hewitt said. "After the US Open last year I didn't play until the Australian summer, this year. I had to take the whole indoor season off and that was rough, not only for me and my rhythm for tennis but also mentally and trying to get back." Hewitt missed eight weeks last year with a knee injury and lost in the third round of the Australian Open in January.

He retired from a match in Marseille in early February with a hamstring injury, which also forced him to withdraw from the tournament in Rotterdam later in the month.

"My goal coming into this tournament was not to get injured, not to re-injure my hamstring," he said. "That wasn't easy in Rotterdam, going there, practicing and then pulling out and watching everyone else play. But that probably made me hungrier this week." After an exchange of early breaks, Hewitt broke in the ninth game and took the first set in the 10th game when Melzer slammed an overhead into the net.

But Melzer made Hewitt work to close it out in the second. He took a 4-1 lead, but Hewitt battled back, saving a set point at 5-6 en route to forcing the tiebreaker.

He saved three more after falling behind 6-4 in the tiebreaker before finally closing the proceedings on his fourth match point.

"I had enough chances at least to take it to a third set," said Melzer, who was denied a second career crown to go with the title he won in Bucharest last year. "I didn't take them—some of them maybe a little unlucky, some of them I might have choked. *AFP*

SPORTS

Elorde Awards to fete Pacman for sixth year

MANNY PACQUIAO WILL RECEIVE HIS SIXTH straight Filipino Boxer of the Year Award during the seventh Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Boxing Awards and Banquet of Champions on March 25 at the grand ballroom of the Elorde Complex in Sucat Road, Parañaque.

Pacquiao, named Top Fighter of the Year by the prestigious Ring Magazine and outstanding athlete by the Philippine Sportswriters Association the last two years, will receive the highest accolade in boxing from the clan of the late Flash Elorde, in whose honor the awards are held.

Pacquiao only missed winning the first boxing award, which went to former world boxing champion Malcolm Tuñacao in 2000.

Another award will make Pacquiao eligible for the Flash Elorde Hall of Fame, which is reserved for boxers who have received the highest honor for seven years.

"The late Flash Elorde reigned as world junior lighweight champion for seven years (1960-67) and it's only fitting that we use this as yardstick in choosing honorees for the Flash Elorde Hall of Fame," said Laura Elorde, wife of Da Flash.

Son Johnny Elorde and wife Liza who are overseeing the preparations, are staging the awards in memory of the boxing legend, one of only two Filipinos—after Pancho Villa—to be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Pacquiao, who last year beat Oscar Larios and Eric Morales of Mexico twice, leads 15 national champions, 21 international titlists, including younger brother Bobby in the Awards Night, which coincides Elorde's 72nd birth anniversary.

Other prominent names in the roster are OPBF minimumweight champion Rodel Mayol, OPBF super flyweight champion Z Gorres, Asia-Pacific bantamweight king Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista, Paba champion Dennis Laurente and OPBF welterweight champion Rey Santillan.

19th Corporate Cup tees off at John Hay today

BAGUIO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE CORPORATE Cup celebrates its 19th season with 10 foreign teams from South Korea, Indonesia and the United States joining the hunt for the overall team and individual championships starting today.

Last year's Group I division winner Team Le Chef will again show their mettle at Camp John Hay Golf Club's challenging par-69 course in the three-day tournament initiated by former Philippine Sports Commission chair Cecil Hechanova.

Camp John Hay Manor Hotel head chef Billy King, Mario's Restaurant owner Mitos Yñiguez, and husband-and-wife Mike and Mina Pearson will carry the fight for Le Chef this year.

"Delegates have come all the way from Cebu, Davao, Zamboanga and Nueva Ecija to battle Le Chef for the crown. I expect a fierce but fun-filled affair," said tournament chair Jeric Hechanova.

Participating teams, which will play 36 holes, have been divided into five groups, including the senior division. Each team can field four players each day with the top three scores counting.

Camp John Hay Development Company, CJH Manor Hotel, Club Leisure, Golforce Inc., Le Chef, Mizuno, Rizgolf Marketing, San Miguel Corp. and Wilson Sports are major sponsors.

The Corporate Cup actually started with the welcome cocktails yesterday.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Yoshiwara (2) Desert Breeze (3), American Idol (8), Top Most (1), Cool Turner (10)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Royal Rose (3), Brazen Truth (4), Silver Eagle (13), Leading Man (11), El Cid (8)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Rivendel (10), Tigres In Action (6), Batang Westside (9), Gundam (5), Sambat (4)

Race 4—Hok Kee Hok (4), Selfmade (3), Chicklet (1), Ingay Ingay (7), Gemstone (13)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Superamerica (8), Ididitmyway (2), Golden Rice (3), Magic Cue (7), Jade Express (11)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Andorra (1), Spinning Bullet (6), Native Prince (3), Jay Nicole (11), King's Choice (8)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Unang Apo/Wild Orphan (6), Latin Music (9), Magic Dancer (8), Detective Daryll (10), Dancing Slew (1)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Scarab (14), Fille D'Honneur (1), My Rabbonnie (3), Princess Adarna (9), Seniority (2), Take A Strike (6)

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Centennial sails home first in Boracay

By Jasmine W. Payo

BORACAY—THE PHILIPPINES REASSERTED ITS SUPERIORITY IN THE e-Standard Insurance Manila to Boracay Race as Centennial overcame shifty winds to rule the IRC Racing Class of the event's fifth edition here yesterday.

Centennial, the winner in 2005 and 2006, topped the premier racing division in 43 hours, 30 minutes and 40 seconds.

The world-class 46-foot yacht, owned and skippered by Ernesto Echauz, banked on a seasoned 14-man crew that included Australian helmsman Jamie Wilmot and seven members of the Philippine team.

Also in the team were co-helmsman Allan Baladares and sail trimmer Raffy Buitre, both sailing bronze medalists in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games in Subic Bay.

"It was tougher this year," said Echauz. "We experienced very light winds and we stopped for six hours in Romblon. In the last two years, we finished in about 22 hours because we never stopped."

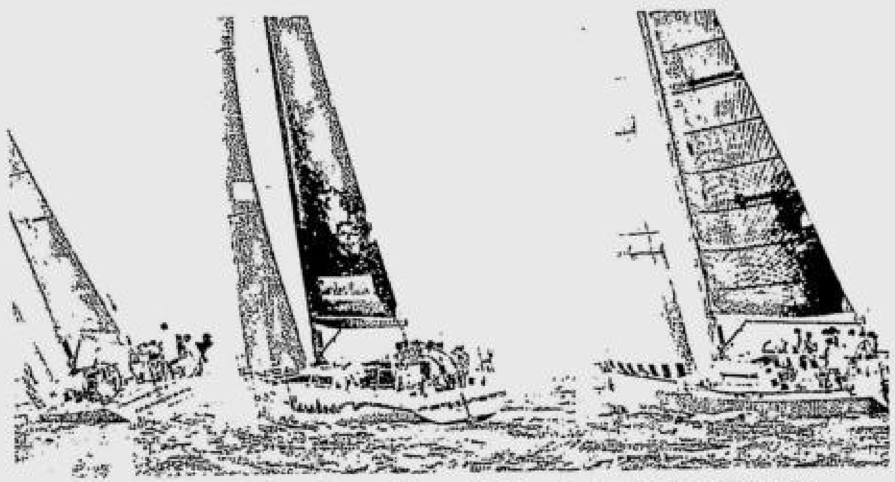
Singapore's Happy Endings, a new Mumm 30 entry captained by Jonathan Mahony, pulled off a surprise with a second-best time of 43:50:12.

Another Philippine bet, Ray Ordoveza's Karakoa, could only muster a third-place finish at 44:42:56 after pacing the local fleet on Sunday through Verde Island Passage between Batangas and Mindoro.

Centennial enjoyed light winds of 10 knots in the initial leg after the start off Manila Yacht Club on Saturday afternoon.

"We had a good start," said Echauz. "The wind started picking up, but then it started falling while we're off Corregidor."

CENTENNIAL passes Corregidor where winds died down. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



KARAKOA (center) jockeys for position with Maandrake (left) and Freefire.

Centennial cruised slowly in Nasugbus, Batangas, before enjoying a brisk 20-knot wind along the Verde Island Passage.

"It was good sailing, the waves there were quite rough," noted Exhauz.

But the strong gust started to die down at the northern tip of Mindoro, stalling the lead fleet that included Karakoa and Hong Kong yachts Mandrake and Freefire.

"We all stopped for six hours in Romblon together with the other boats," said Echauz.

Race committee chair George Hackett said that the race became a "virtual parking lot" at Dumalit Point in Mindoro.

When the winds started picking up again on Sunday night, Centennial recovered in the final stretch and docked in the pristine waters of Boracay at 3 a.m. yesterday.

Maiden Hong Kong, a massive 115-foot yacht that initially paced the 28 foreign and local yachts, did not finish the race due to a technicality.

Hong Kong's Hummingbird also retired due to insufficient battery supply.

The top division finishers as well as the overall race winner will be known today.

The event drew the most number of entries in five years with racers coming from North America, Europe, Australia, China , Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Kiamco sweeps US tilt, pockets ₱890,000

THREE-TIME SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES GOLD medalist Warren Kiamco asserted his supremacy in the 14th Annual US Bar Table Championship yesterday, winning both the 9-ball and 8-ball competition and pocketing a total prize of $18,000 (about P890,000) at the Sands Regency Hotel in Reno, Nevada.

The 36-year-old Kiamco bested compatriot Antonio Gabica, 5-3, in the finals of the 8-ball event to take the $7,000 top purse, according to an AZbilliards.com report.

"I really prepared hard for this (US Bar Table Championship)," said Kiamco, who placed seventh in the Turning Stone Classic Championship in Verona, New York, last week. "I want to do better this year."

Kiamco is in his first overseas trip since being sidelined by a recurring ulcer that kept him out of the billiards circuit for most of last year, including the World Pool Championship.

WARREN Kiamco wins at expense of Antonio Gabica.

Having won the 9-ball event at the expense of Mexico's Rafael Martinez, 9-5, last Friday, Kiamco earned the $5,000 bonus for ruling both divisions. Kiamco became the first player since Cliff Joyner to win the bonus prize.

En route to the 8-ball finals, the Quezon City-based Kiamco who hails from Pasil, Cebu, bested Gabica in the seventh round of the winner's bracket and subdued Kim Davenport, 5-1, in the hot-seat match.

Gabica forced a rematch with Kiamco after topping the loser's bracket by whipping Walter Glass, 5-4, Shane Van Boening, 5-4, and Davenport, 5-1, respectively.

Gabica, the 2006 Doha Asian Games 9-ball gold medalist, received $4,500 for his runner-up finish.

Other Filipinos who competed in the 9-ball and 8-ball competition were Rodolfo Luat, Gandy Valle and Edwin Montal. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Opposition to Pacquiao's political bid

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE EXPRESSING their opposition to Manny Pacquiao throwing his hat into the political arena.

Online polls, and even people in the streets, are against his political ambition, saying he should stick to boxing and make hay there while the sun still shines.

I know he wants to serve the people, but he can be of help in so many other ways without entering politics, which is an entirely different ball game.

Pacquiao better think twice. Why is he in a hurry? Has money and fame corrupted his thinking?

Except for Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, one of his closest friends, and Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson, a senatorial bet, many want Manny to drop his political plans, among them reader Amador Moriles of Capoocan, Leyte, and youth leader Harvey Keh, who e-mailed the national boxing hero's close associates about their opposition to Pacquiao's political plans.

Text messages that I have read also expressed their apprehension about it. "*Hindi niya puwedeng pagsabayin ang pagbo-boksing at paggawa ng batas.* (He cannot mix boxing and lawmaking at the same time)." Another said, "If Pacman backs out of politics, it would even be a great opportunity to boost his career. His fans will love him more."

Still another said, "Pacquiao's withdrawal will certainly make his mother (Dionesia) happy. Mother knows best."

Pacquiao will meet unbeaten Mexican Jorge Solis on April 14 at the Alamadome in San Antonio, Texas.

* * *

Contrary to reports, Efren "Bata" Reyes is not retiring this year. His longtime manager and *kumpadre* Rollie Vicente told the INQUIRER that the report is not true.

Reyes may be considered too old for an athlete at 52 years but he has no plans of retiring.

"It is not true that Efren is calling it quits," emphasized the soft-spoken Vicente. "As a matter of fact, we are competing in the Japan Open on March 16 and at the Los Angeles Open on March 26."

Thus, he could miss the selection process in the 2nd National Pool Championship on March 26 to 31 which will be held under the auspices of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines headed by Ernesto Fajardo.

Life moves on for Bata Reyes. As far as I am concerned, he is the greatest athlete in Philippine billiards history.

After a successful laser eye operation conducted by a team of specialists headed by Dr. Jack Arroyo and Dr. Arnold Salud of the American Eye Center, Reyes returned to his old fighting form.

A mainstay of Puyat Sports along with Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Marlon Manalo and Alex Pagulayan, Reyes has won one major tournament after another. He has been around so long that many consider him as a father figure. He is crowd darling because of his flawless style, humble conduct and pleasant demeanor.

He rose to pool prominence in 1985 when the Puyat brothers (Popit and Putch), sponsored his international campaign, including stints in the lucrative American tour. Among other achievements, Reyes won the World Pool 9-Ball Championship in Cardiff, Wales, in 1999, and last year ruled the $2 million IPT World 8-Ball Championship in Reno, Nevada. Teaming up with Bustamante, they topped the inaugural World Cup of Pool in South Wales, Britain.

Bito decisions Thai, bags WBO continental title

FILIPINO RYAN BITO CAPTURED THE WORLD Boxing Organization (WBO) Intercontinental minimumweight crown with a unanimous decision victory over Thailand's Saengpetch Sor Sakulphan on Saturday night at the Elorde Sports Complex in Parañaque, Manila.

Judges Tony Comia and Warren Jaro both scored the bout 115-112 for Bito, of the Marty Elorde Stable, while Jonathan Davis saw it at 117-110.

Referee Bruce McTavish deducted one point off the Thai fighter for low blows.

In the chief supporting bout, RP No. 1 featherweight Michael Farenas proved too much for the veteran Dondon Lapuz, stopping his foe in the second canto of their scheduled 10-rounder.

Farenas is hoping to get a crack at the RP title soon, according to Japanese Kosuke Washio, who co-manages the fighter with former WBC champion Gerry Peñalosa.

In other fights, Leonardo Doronio stopped Jaypee Ignacio in the fifth; Edwin Dignos decisioned Rene Nival; Ryan Origenes won by TKO over Janjan Lemura; Ging Daculiat also prevailed by TKO over Mario Suson; Ericson Origenes stopped Ariel Lagunsad; and Bal Pangantihon and Edison Berwela fought to a technical draw. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

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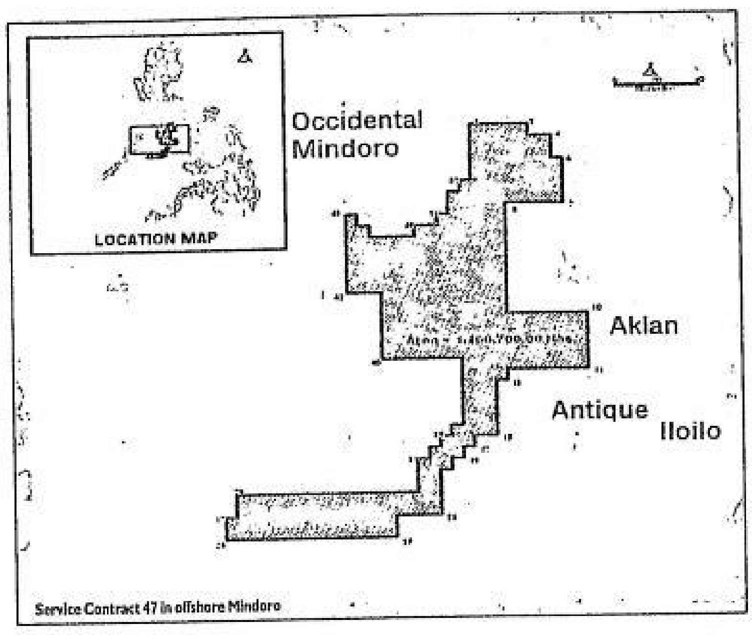
Stocks plunge 4.5% to lowest in 2 months



Service Contract 47 in offshore Mindoro

Foreign firms to drill 2 oil wells in Luzon

By Abigail L. Ho

TWO FOREIGN FIRMS ARE INvesting between $19 million and $25 million to drill two exploration wells in separate locations in Luzon in the first quarter alone.

In a recent interview with the INQUIRER, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the Netherlands' Premier Oil has earmarked between $3.6 million and $9.6 million to drill one exploration well within the Ragay Gulf in the Bicol Region.

The Ragay Gulf falls under Service Contract 43, which covers an area of more than a million hectares in size within the

FOREIGN/ B2

Analysts see further slide as global markets skid

STOCK PRICES PLUNGED YESTERDAY AS NERVOUS INVESTORS, spooked by the uncertainty in worldwide equity markets due to concerns of a US-led global economic slowdown, led another round of broad-based selling.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 142.46 points, or 4.5 percent, at 2,997.88, adding to Friday's 1.4-percent loss. It was the worst closing level since Jan. 12.

"It still looks bad tomorrow, since the drop in the Asian markets may pull down markets in Europe and the US later in the day. It's snowballing," said AB Capital Securities research director Jose Vistan. *(See related story on page B2.)*

PCCI Securities president Francisco Liboro said the market would likely take its cue from Wall Street's performance overnight. "Investors are nervous," said Liboro.

Analysts said local stocks tracked the weakness in global markets after Wall Street tumbled again Friday following a sell-off triggered by worries over the US and Chinese economies.

STOCKS/ B2

91-day T-bill rate inches up

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY REJECTED all bids for the longer term treasury bills after jittery banks tried to bid up the rates following the recent turmoil in global financial markets.

The 91-day treasury bill yield, used by banks as a benchmark in pricing loans, inched up to 2.935 percent after hitting an all-time low of 2.885 percent during the Bureau of the Treasury's auction.

The P500-million offering for the 91-day bills was four times oversubscribed as the market flocked to the shortest tenor due to the uncertainties in financial markets, National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters after the auction.

The Treasury rejected all bids for the 182- and 364-day bills where tenders were relatively thin at only P2.68 billion and P3.38

91-DAY/ B2

INDICATORS

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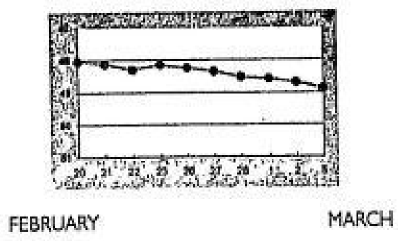

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 48.89 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 5, 2007

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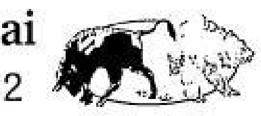

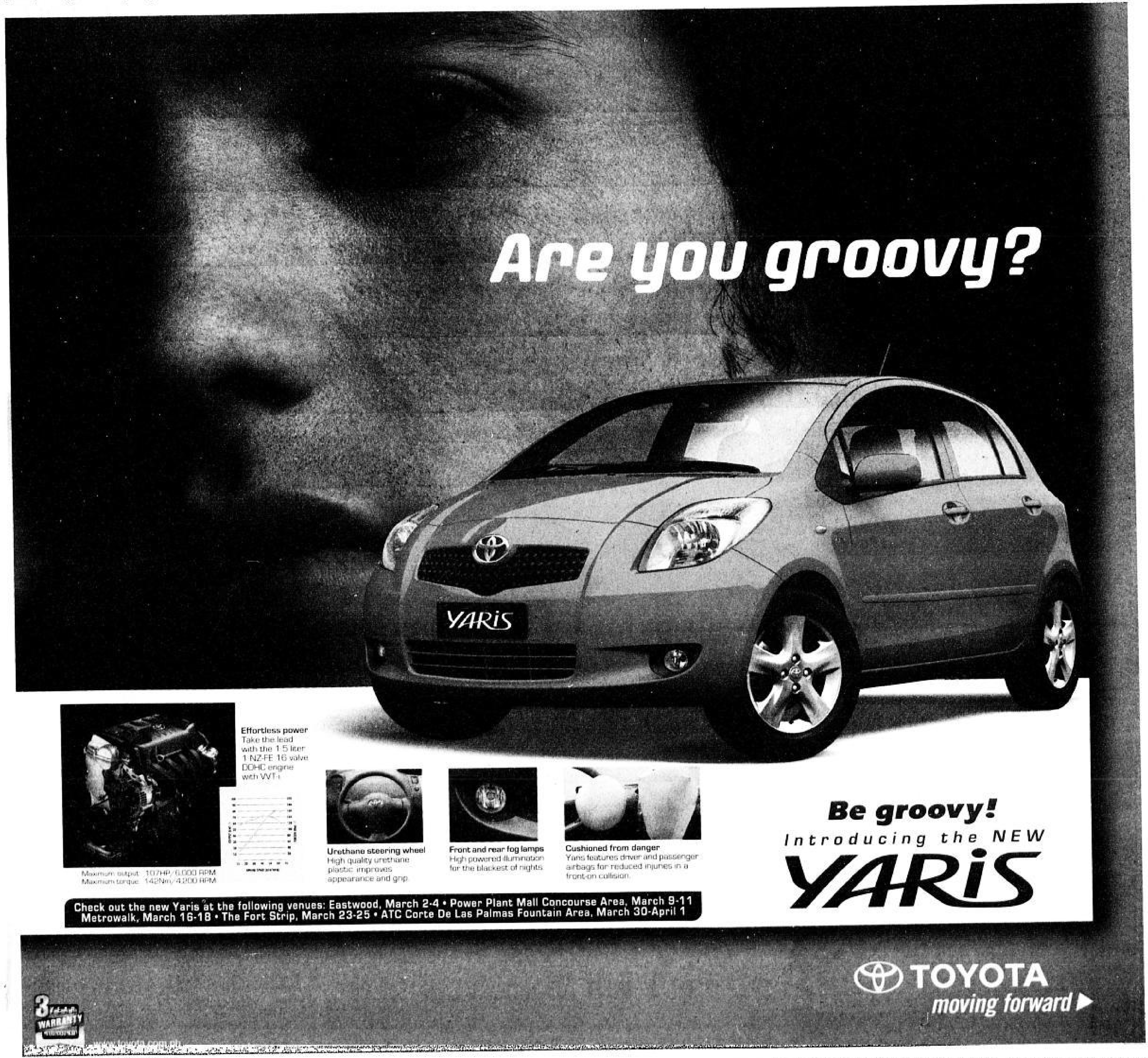

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Asian markets plunge across the board, Nikkei tumbles

TOKYO—ASIAN MARKETS PLUNGED YESterday, extending their slide into a second week as investors dumped stocks that had surged in recent weeks and on worries about a possible global slowdown.

On the region's largest stock market in Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 index fell for a fifth day, tumbling 575.68 points, or 3.34 percent, to finish at 16,642.25 points. Since reaching a nearly seven-year high last Monday, the index has plummeted 8.64 percent over the last five trading sessions.

Markets in Hong Kong, Australia, the Philippines, India and South Korea were all down sharply yesterday, continuing their slide from last week, when a 9-percent plunge in Chinese stocks triggered a drop on Wall Street and other global markets.

Analysts said the declines could continue for at least awhile longer.

The Korea Composite Stock Price Index fell for a fourth day, sinking 2.7 percent, while Australia's benchmark S&P/ASX200 index fell for a fifth day, tumbling 2.3 percent. In India, the market opened 3.7 percent lower.

"Basically the fall is because global markets are seeing a downtrend," said Devina Mehra of First Global, brokerage in Mumbai, India. She said the fast rise in India's market in recent years was "overdone and expectations were too high."

In China, the Shanghai Composite index fell a more modest 1.6 percent, but foreign-currency denominated "B shares" tumbled after officials denied rumors those stocks might be merged with the mainstream Chinese-currency "A shares."

A lack of market-boosting news as the Chinese national legislature began its annual session also appeared to sap buying enthusiasm.

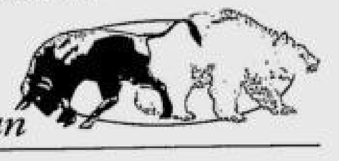
The yen's recent surge hit Japanese exporters including Canon Inc., Sony Corp. and Toyota Motor Corp. The dollar fell to 115.60 yen from 116.75 yen late Friday in New York and from above 120 yen less than a week ago.

Analysts said some of the market's drop appeared to be fueled by speculation that investors were unwinding so-called yen carry trades, in which investors borrow yen at Japan's low interest rates to invest in other markets to seek higher returns. But as the yen appreciates, investors stand to see their gains eroded when those borrowed funds are converted back to yen.

"The market seems to have entered a full-scale downward trend, on worries over likely unwinding of yen carry trades, as cued by the sharp strengthening of the yen," said Hyundai Securities analyst Yang Chang-ho.

Global meltdown as Shanghai corrects

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

I AM DISPENSING WITH THE JOKES THIS week because readers must be worried about the global meltdown, led by the Shanghai and Shenzhen indexes and the PSEi. The fall in China was not caused by any slowdown in the economy but by the government taking measures against speculators and an attempt to cool the growth rate to 8 percent. The decline of 9.2 percent in Shanghai sent tsunami shock waves around the world and the PSEi, at one time, was down 10.2 percent that day, closing down 8.3 percent, its biggest fall in nine years.

Since the beginning of 2006, the Shanghai index has risen from 1000 to 2300 with a similar correction in January. A 9-percent correction in a market, which has risen 130 percent, is hardly a reason for the shockwaves that reverberated around the world. The Chinese economy is growing at 10.2 percent and the government would like to cool it to around 8 percent, still a fantastic growth rate. With the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and an Expo in Shanghai in 2010, in which 100 million people are expected to attend, I do not see any major slow down.

Due to the growing presence of hedge funds, the dealers sold or shorted Wall Street, Europe and Hong Kong with catastrophic consequences. The DOW had its worst day in nine years and ended the week down 4.2 percent; the Nasdaq had its worst decline in six years and finished 5.8 percent lower. European markets were badly affected and Asian markets suffered even more.

Wall Street does have problems despite Bernanke's assurance that everything is normal. During 2006, GDP growth fell from 2.9 percent to 2.2 percent and home sales slumped 16.6 percent, its worst performance for 13 years. Consumer spending was up 0.5 percent in January and income up 1 percent, the core inflation rate rose from 2.2 percent to 2.3 percent. There was also an unexpected increase in jobless claims and consumer confidence fell from 96.9 to 91.3. All this points to a slowing economy, not a recession. Economists are now expecting interest rates to be cut in the second quarter rather than the second half. Bernanke said that globalization had not reduced US inflation, indeed it might have increased it due to Chinese buying of commodities.

In Europe, 20,000 jobs will be lost because of delays in the Airbus 380 and most of these will be in Germany and France. The French are complaining about the strength of the euro against the dollar and another rate increase looks imminent. In the UK, another increase in the bank rate is expected before the end of the year. The Japanese recovery seems to be sputtering after the tiny increase in the bank rate from 0.25 percent to 0.5 percent.

The volatility in China reminded investors that emerging markets carried a degree of risk, reflected in the higher return on their bonds and in the rising price of their shares. So there was a global correction in which the Philippine market suffered greatly, simply because our market is so small compared to other countries.

For the last six months, foreign fund managers have been buying Philippine blue chips in ever-growing quantities so our index got to within 1 percent of its all-time 1997 high. The total net figure is shown daily in my newsletter and it is also shown for every stock, together with the risk factor, volume and price change. I have reformatted the newsletter so that all the data is together instead of being scattered under different sections. You can now study stocks though changes in prices, volume, risk and net foreign activity, all on two sheets covering 50 stocks.

Turning to our own market, our economy is in good shape and the team headed by Finance Secretary Gary Teves has reached the budget deficit target of P63 billion in 2006, a year ahead of schedule. It was intended to balance the budget by 2008 but this might be deferred until 2010 so that the government can spend heavily on infrastructure, bridges, ports, schools, healthcare, education and tourism.

Central Bank Governor Tetangco has done a great job of financing overseas borrowings at very advantageous rates, unimaginable a year ago. He has also swapped a large amount of various bonds into a small number of liquid issues, thereby creating a bond market. With inflation down to 3.3 percent, the yield of the benchmark 91-day treasury bill fell below 3 percent. The tiering system meant that each bank could only deposit P5 billion at high rates, thereafter the rates became progressively more unattractive and they were forced to buy bonds. I hope he will not dismantle it in the near future. At present, banks have so much liquidity but nowhere to invest it except to lend to real estate companies.

Of all the emerging markets, we probably have the strongest economy, supported by increased taxation, remittances, call centers, back-office outsourcing and massive investment from international companies in our mineral assets of $1 trillion. But because our market is dominated by foreign players, the PSEi will not recover until the selling stops. On Feb. 27, when the Shanghai market crashed, foreigners sold P620 million and I told subscribers to stay out of the market. Next day, they sold P1.15 billion and on March 1, P634 million. Last Friday they sold P467 million. Unless you have these figures daily, you will not know when to reenter the market. The futures market indicates a lower opening on Wall Street so the correction will probably continue a while longer but our market is not expensive and there are plenty of leaders that are looking attractive. The risk factor is very low.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Stocks plunge 4.5% to lowest in 2 months

From page B1

Losers whipped gainers 145 to six, while nine stocks were unchanged. A total of 9.5 billion shares worth P5.2 billion changed hands.

"The market's consolidation, I think, is overdone," said Joseph Roxas of Eagle Equities. "It shows the market is very volatile considering that we are not heavily traded compared to other equities in the region."

Ron Rodrigo of Unicapital Securities said he believed that the shaky ride was temporary and the long-term outlook for the Philippine market was still bullish.

"We have been waiting for this consolidation for sometime now as most issues are already overvalued," he said, adding the market is now in a better position to endure shocks because of the country's stronger economic fundamentals.

"There is nothing to be seriously worried about yet. We are better off now compared to the previous doldrums in the market after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, and after the (Joseph) Estrada administration collapsed," he said.

Despite the market's recent sharp losses, Rodrigo said it has not turned into a bear market although there were indications that some nervous investors have temporarily shifted to less risky fixed-income instruments after Wall Street skidded last week.

Among the day's heavy losers include Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. or PLDT, which fell P65 to P2,350, and Ayala Corp., which shed P15 to P545.

Top-traded PNOC-Energy Development Corp. lost 40 centavos to P5.50. *AFP, AP*

Foreign firms to drill 2 oil wells in Luzon

From page B1

marginally explored Southeast Luzon sedimentary basin.

The Department of Energy has ranked the Southeast Luzon sedimentary basin as second only to the producing Northwest Palawan area in terms of hydrocarbon prospects.

Lotilla said drilling of the well should take place by March, or as soon as a rig becomes available.

Apart from Premier Oil, he said Malaysia's Petronas Carigali Overseas Sdn Bhd would also be infusing $15.4 million into exploration well drilling activities within Service Contract 47 in offshore Mindoro.

Drilling should take place either this month or April, he said.

Petronas holds an 80-percent stake in SC 47. PNOC-Exploration Corp. has 19.4 percent, PetroEnergy Resources Corp., 0.4 percent and Basic Petroleum Inc., 0.2 percent.

Earlier in the year, the SC 47 consortium said an exploration well would be drilled within the Kamia prospect, formerly Cherry prospect, in offshore Mindoro.

The proposed well, or Kamia 1, would be drilled to a depth of 1,500 meters in about 160 meters of water.

The prospect has an estimated resource potential of 158 million barrels of oil, PetroEnergy chief information officer Arturo Maulion had earlier said.

The cost of the drilling, he said, would be shouldered entirely by Petronas.

Up to the drilling of this well, he said the other consortium members "will be carried free."

Lotilla said these new exploration investments would cover the first quarter alone, with other infusions set to come in later in the year.

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91-day T-bill ...

From page B1

billion, respectively, against the offering of P1.5 billion and P2 billion.

"They were in all sense and purpose throwaway bids," Cruz said of the longer term tenders.

Had the Treasury accepted the bids, the 182- and 364-day rates would have jumped 32 basis points and 52 basis points, respectively.

"Given uncertain times, the market tends to want to go short-term," he noted.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 5, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.75	10.75	9.6	9.6	184,900
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	54	54	51.5	51.5	2,287,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	65	62.5	63	3,419,500
China Banking Corp.	855	855	830	845	2,870
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.53	0.53	0.48	0.5	10,920,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	99	99	70	94	607,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	59	54.5	56	3,485,800
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	49	49	49	49	5,000
Philippine National Bank	49	49	45.5	46	66,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	39.5	40	37.5	38.5	383,900
Security Bank Corp.	75	75	72.5	72.5	51,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	58	58	55	57.5	137,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	100,000
Citisecoline.Com Inc.	6	6	5.6	5.7	1,419,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	5.4	6	5.4	6	16,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1580	1580	1580	1580	70
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.84	1.84	688,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	720	720	650	660	8,350
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2050	2070	2050	2070	860
Ivantage Corp.	1.54	1.58	1.42	1.46	8,577,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.5	110,555,000
First Gen Corp.	53	53	51.5	51.5	1,529,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	73.5	73.5	68.5	69	552,900
Manila Electric Co. A	70	70	64.5	65.5	354,500
Manila Electric Co. B	69	69	65	66.5	1,151,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.4	9.4	8.9	8.9	2,756,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.15	4.2	8,518,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.38	1.38	1.26	1.28	700,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	89,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	14,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	49.5	49.5	47.5	47.5	768,900
RFM Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.26	132,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	136,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	90,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	63	62.5	63	67,100
San Miguel Corp. B	74	74	72	72	53,500
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.1	1.92	1.92	3,008,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18	17	17.25	763,700
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.58	1.58	1.4	1.4	24,504,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	3,004,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.7	8.7	7.9	8.3	3,175,000
Republic Cement Corp.	6.7	5.7	5.4	5.4	76,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.5	4.5	4,300,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.3	0.31	31,250,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	145,700,000
Ayala Corp.	555	560	540	545	509,930
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.68	0.68	370,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.2	7.8	7.9	3,693,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	36,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.15	3	3.05	706,000
APC Group Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.3	0.3	14,020,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	358,100,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.34	13,334,000
Paf Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	150,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	6.3	6.3	4.3	5	1,392,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.7	9,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.15	49,242,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.2	6.4	74,970,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	4.75	4.8	923,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.1	655,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.25	12.25	2,095,400
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	40,000
Keppel Holdings	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
Keppel Holdings B	1.6	1.6	1.42	1.42	35,000
Medco Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.33	200,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.51	0.6	0.51	0.59	110,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.5	10	7.8	8.1	3,253,000
Multitech Inv. Corp	1.92	1.92	1.5	1.68	2,920,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.016	0.016	8,700,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.22	0.25	7,550,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.67	0.67	1,260,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.175	0.18	23,130,000
SM Investments Corp.	355	355	335	337.5	199,930
South China Resources Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	290,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.64	1.7	1.56	1.56	730,000
Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	230,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.5	15	15	22,100,800
Belle Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.22	1.24	71,140,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.2	750,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.41	0.44	0.41	0.44	410,000
Cebu Holdings Inc	3.55	3.85	3.5	3.85	679,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.32	2.32	2.26	2.26	186,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	26,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.24	0.25	3,060,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.73	0.74	56,720,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	13,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.44	1.46	175,644,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	30,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.009	0.009	163,300,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	100,300,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.45	2,320,000
City & Land Developers	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	20,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.82	0.84	0.8	0.82	16,690,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.7	135,063,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.4	95,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.97	0.99	0.79	0.81	34,040,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.25	19.25	18.25	19	2,799,700
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.63	0.63	0.61	0.61	12,680,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.65	3.65	4,261,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.5	11	11	13,296,100
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.66	0.69	920,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.15	0.155	29,660,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22.75	22.75	22.25	22.25	54,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1	1	1	1	22,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.56	1.58	14,493,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1345	1355	1340	1345	64,040
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7	7	6.5	6.6	4,385,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2400	2400	2340	2350	115,970
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.245	0.25	18,000,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.25	5.4	4.2	5.2	471,000
Imperial Res	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	29,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.46	2.46	2.28	2.28	152,000
IPVG Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.2	5.5	2,689,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0725	0.075	0.065	0.0675	179,700,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.66	320,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.26	2.26	2.04	2.1	101,000
Philweb Corp.	0.046	0.047	0.04	0.043	494,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.1	304,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	90,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	28.5	28.5	26.5	27.5	1,260,700
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.02	1.02	386,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	8	8	8	8	2,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.65	2.7	2.55	2.65	2,336,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.33	0.36	1,930,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.84	0.86	2,980,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.1	286,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.48	2.65	1,684,000
Paxys Inc.	27.5	27.5	25	25	1,453,700
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	22,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5	5.2	4.75	4.8	1,338,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.2	5.2	4.8	4.9	1,481,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.01	0.01	595,900,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.7	8.7	8.1	8.2	1,289,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.25	11.25	11	11	21,300
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.42	2.6	2.42	2.6	52,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.68	1.74	1.56	1.56	129,830,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.26	36,880,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.33	0.33	0.28	0.29	28,520,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.028	0.025	0.026	686,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.032	0.029	0.03	753,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.016	0.017	3,444,800,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.75	15,222,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.5	17.5	17	17	845,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.66	0.69	0.66	0.69	340,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.2	1.2	1.02	1.04	7,219,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	5,990,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	457,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	209,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	554,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.6	9.6	9.2	9.2	176,000

CURRENCIES

March 5, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.758035	1.000000	48.7150
Japan	Yen	0.006490	0.008562	0.4171
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473317	1.943600	94.6825
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097007	0.127971	6.2341
Switzerland	Franc	0.623179	0.822098	40.0485
Canada	Dollar	0.644259	0.849907	41.4032
Singapore	Dollar	0.496877	0.655480	31.9317
Australia	Dollar	0.594165	0.783822	38.1839
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.010757	2.652590	129.2209
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202175	0.266709	12.9927
Brunei	Dollar	0.495254	0.653339	31.8274
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022628	0.029851	1.4542
UAE	Dirham	0.206465	0.272368	13.2684
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.319200	64.2648
Korea	Won	0.000804	0.001061	0.0517
China	Yuan**	0.097856	0.129091	6.2887
Argentina	Peso	0.244843	0.322997	15.7348
Brazil	Real	0.358579	0.473037	23.0440
Denmark	Kroner	0.134297	0.177164	8.6305
India	Rupee	0.017185	0.022671	1.1044
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216273	0.285307	13.8987
Mexico	New Peso	0.067643	0.089234	4.3470
New Zealand	Dollar	0.521596	0.688089	33.5203
Norway	Kroner	0.123012	0.162277	7.9053
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012486	0.016472	0.8024
South Africa	Rand	0.103085	0.135990	6.6248
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023047	0.030404	1.4811

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 2, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 2, 2007

OFWs won't bite gov't $1-B bond offer, says BTr

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas' proposal for the government to offer as much as $1 billion in retail Treasury bonds (RTBs) exclusively for overseas Filipino workers may not be attractive in this low-interest rate environment, National Treasurer Omar Cruz said yesterday.

At this point in time, Cruz said, the national government would find it difficult to compete with other higher yielding investment outlets available to OFWs unless it offers preferential rates.

"The funds of overseas workers are currently invested, whether in time deposits or mutual funds," Cruz said. "They are getting certain returns.

He added that the government would also need to hurdle some obstacles.

"Our interest rates are very low now," Cruz said.

If the Bureau of Treasury would issue at low rates, the offering would flop, he explained.

As such, the National Treasurer said the BSP's proposal to tap the OFW market would have to be worked out in terms of structure and operating details.

"There are cross border regulatory (issues)," Cruz said. "Here you are cutting across markets: How do you sell to them, how do you get them to solicit. There are different regulations in different markets.

"I'm not against it. Neither am I downplaying it. Sure you can tap it, but we have to tap it the proper way—with proper instrumentation, proper execution, proper documentation, proper clearances, proper selling and proper pricing," he said.

For its part, he said, the national government would always have to issue under the best terms for itself as well as for the investors.

"(The OFW remittances) are resources that ... obviously (the national government) can tap," he said. "It's a source of funding for us."

Meanwhile, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said in a press statement that the institution had intensified its broad-based efforts in 2006 to improve the environment for OFW remittance flows.

He said the initiatives were anchored on five principles, namely:

- Enhancing transparency and promoting competition in the remittance market to lower remittance charges;
- Improving the country's payments and settlements systems to facilitate faster, safer and more efficient transfer of funds to beneficiaries;
- Improving access to financial services;
- Encouraging OFWs and their families to increase savings and investments; and
- Promoting advocacy programs to cultivate financial literacy among OFWs and their families.

Based on BSP estimates, money sent home by OFWs likely hit as much as $14 billion in 2006—a new record high—whether coursed through the banking system or other channels.

The bulk of OFW remittances continue to pour in from the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan, Canada, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Taiwan.

Through the years, OFW remittances have made the Philippine economy more resilient to shocks that could otherwise affect growth. In terms of employment, for instance, the ratio of jobless Filipinos would have doubled to 20 percent from the current 10 percent if all OFWs remained in the country.

PPA sets aside ₱234M for new port projects

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE PORT AUTHORITY has set aside about P234 million for four port development projects, the contracts for which are up for bidding this month.

There is one project each in the provinces of Agusan del Norte and Masbate, and two projects in Camarines Sur.

The proposed port expansion project in Masao, Butuan City has been allocated a budget of P85 million.

The last day for the submission of accomplished eligibility documents is on March 15.

The winning bidder will be tasked to establish a back-up area, drainage system, and port lighting system within a year from the start of work.

The proposed San Pascual port expansion project in Masbate's Burias Island, meanwhile, has a budget of P43 million. Eligible bidders must submit their proposals by March 30.

The scope of works include a roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) ramp, breasting dolphin, back-up area, and port lighting system. The PPA set the project duration at 300 calendar days.

In Camarines Sur, the proposed Tandoc port development project has been allocated a budget of P47 million. The last day for the submission of documents is on March 29.

The winning bidder must establish a concrete platform, Ro-Ro ramp, breasting dolphin and rock causeway within a year from the start of work.

Also in Camarines Sur, the proposed Caramoan port expansion project has a budget of P59 million.

Eligible bidders must submit their proposals by March 29.

The scope of work include a concrete platform, Ro-Ro ramp, breasting dolphin, back-up area, and port lighting system.

The project is supposed to be completed in a year's time.

As with other projects, proposals higher than the budget set will be rejected automatically, according to bid documents.

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Atlas starts commercial nickel production, eyes more shipments

Second batch of exports to China ends trial phase

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED ATLAS CONsolidated Mining and Development Corp. has shipped its second batch of nickel ore exports to China from its mining site in Palawan, with more shipments being planned for this month.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Atlas said the China-bound shipment left its Berong anchorage facility on March 2, 2007, carrying 51,000 tons of laterite ore.

According to the company, the shipment marks the beginning of the full commercial operations of the nickel mine, ending the trial phase that began with the previous month's 19,000-ton shipment to China from the same location.

"We are pleased that initial teething problems on production and shipping are now under control and that full commercial operations are now underway," Atlas chair and president Alfredo Ramos said in a statement.

He said the Berong project had a potential resource of 275 million dry tons with an average grade of 1.3 percent nickel, making it the fourth largest nickel laterite resource in the world.

A third shipment of approximately 50,000 tons is expected to commence loading today, with the fourth shipment of a similar capacity expected to be ready by March 20, 2007.

All told, a total of 100,000 tons of laterite ore are currently stockpiled on the coast and ready for shipment to China.

Atlas said demand for laterite ore of the quality and grade produced at Berong exceeds supply "by a large margin."

"To meet this demand, Berong Nickle Corp. is rapidly expanding production and building additional stockpiling facilities," the company told the PSE. It added that daily mine production was expected to increase to between 3,000 and 4,000 wet metric tons per day, to be maintained throughout the dry season.

To date, mine production has come from the lower grade area, referred to as the bulk metallurgical sample area. The firm said, however, that future production will come from the commercial section of the mine which is expected to yield higher grades of nickel ore.

The access road to this area, which is expected to provide the bulk of the company's production this year, has been completed.

Nickel is the main element used to produce stainless steel for industrial and commercial applications. The country hosts one of the largest nickel deposits in Southeast Asia, while China has emerged as the largest market for nickel in recent years due to its surging economy.

"The project brings many local and national benefits, including employment, export and foreign exchange earnings, as well as other welfare and socio-economic benefits," Ramos said.

Last year, Berong Nickel Corp., a joint venture of Atlas, London-based Toledo Mining Corp. and Investika Ltd. of Australia, secured a permit to start the full-scale commercial mining of laterite nickel ore from the Berong mines.

Ramos had said that once commercial operations started, Berong Nickel Corp. would export about one million tons of ore this year and increase this to 1.5 million tons in 2008.

AIM EXECS VISIT MALACAÑANG

President Macapagal-Arroyo receives Asian Institute of Management chair Washington SyCip (center) and AIM officers and alumni (from L to R) Dr. Jagdish Parikh, Robert Chandran, William Anderson and Dr. Ralph Sorenson during their recent visit to Malacañang on the occasion of the institution's 39th anniversary. AIM is reorienting itself to become "the school of choice" of any manager or entrepreneur wanting to do business in Asia.

Philex export earnings hit ₱840M in Feb.

PHILEX MINING CORP. EXPORTED P840 million worth of precious metals in February, topping its P819-million haul in the previous month, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

Philex aid earnings came from the sale of its gold, silver and copper to foreign buyers.

"In February, 715,239 dry metric tons of disseminated copper and gold were delivered by the mine and treated at the Banget flotation facilities," Philex chair and CEO Walter W. Brown said in a letter to the exchange.

In January, the firm produced 781,865 dry metric tons from its facility.

The firm's earnings in February were higher than month-ago level due largely to rising world market prices.

The process yielded 6,055 dry metric tons of copper concentrates averaging 27.11 percent copper; 63.68 grams per dry metric ton of gold, and 60 grams per dry metric ton of silver.

The yields for all three precious metals were higher than those reported in the previous month.

The final yield amounted to 1,641,317 kilograms of copper, 387,791 grams of gold and 365,013 grams of silver.

Last month, Philex said it had begun the "pre-feasibility stage" for its mining project in Northeastern Mindanao, which may contain significant deposits of gold and copper.

It said Philex Gold Inc., a subsidiary, would prepare a final report on the pre-feasibility study which would be completed by the third quarter of 2007.

Philex Mining owns an 81-percent stake in Philex Gold, which is a Canadian-registered firm.

Chinese new ear

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

PSST—THE AYALA GROUP IS LOOKING AT real estate ventures in China.

Hold it! Before you stir up widespread panic in business, it's just the whisper going around the Chinese-Filipino community.

As everybody knows, including the Spanish-speaking couple in Malacañang, the Ayala group is the exact embodiment of a Spanish ancestry business here.

Ayala Land, now growing strong in commercial center projects, will try to carry on overseas its intense rivalry here with the "Chinoy" real estate firms (SM malls of Henry Sy, for instance), probably all the way to Beijing.

If my ears still do not fail me, the Ayala Land is looking at a new humongous commercial center project near the Forbidden City.

According to the Binondo chitchat, the Ayala group will partner with a Beijing-resident "ABC"—or American-born Chinese—as opposed to "CBA," or China-based American.

Hmm, do you think the rumor explains why Ayala Land president Jaime Ayala is spending a lot of time at the company's commercial center division?

***

FFCCCII president Francis Chua is widely known in business as "close" to this cute administration of Gloriaetta. And so they say that the opposition may have misgivings over the FFCCCII-initiated debate between the opposition and the administration senatorial slates, because it will be held at the Manila Hotel.

Meaning, no hecklers—okay!

Look here, mister, the business community is really interested in the debate precisely because it can cover a wide range of issues affecting business.

I mean, the debate is not a rubble-rousing job. The Senate, after all, does a lot of intervention in business, not to mention all those tiring investigations.

Okay—so a business-policy debate may be to the advantage of Gloriaetta's candidates. Like it or not, the economy is still the selling point of this cute administration.

And that's probably why the GO refuses to attend the debate.

It is not its battleground. At this point, to gain public support, the opposition must be desperate for a real big scandal involving the Palace. And to hell with business!

***

What could explain the major correction in the stock market last week? Better yet, what could explain the overnight rebound? Did traffic have anything to do with it?

Anyway, here's what Gloriaetta said: "Our fundamentals are rooted well and spread over a wide range and cannot be overcome easily in a single sweep."

Okay, ma'am, we get it: The economy is strong.

Come to think of it, the stock market saw a major correction one day last week, although business prospects in this country did not just suddenly change overnight.

They are still the same, right? We still have big problems.

At the same time, despite those problems, we also know that business confidence is building up.

This is evident in the stock market, which is the strongest performer in Southeast Asia since the start of 2007, mainly because of foreign funds.

Foreign investors last year brought roughly P68.53 billion more into the market than what they took out.

Because of those foreign funds, the peso was also Asia's best-performing currency.

It actually gained by 6.3 percent in the last six months, according to a report from the Wall Street investment house Bear Stearns.

In other words, if the market is doing well, business can raise more capital from the public through stock offerings. And this is good for us! All of us!

For instance, more that P50 billion worth of stock offerings were done last year. Much more are forthcoming this year, believe me.

That's why even the foreign business chambers are beside themselves in praising the economic performance of this cute administration.

Now, if only the expected economic boom will also not create too much traffic…

All right, I know I may be asking too much already!

***

From what I heard, MAP president Albert del Rosario, the former ambassador to the USA, is seeking an encore of the benefit-concert dubbed "Adeste Fideles."

It was the concert held last December at the parish church in Forbes Park, the Sanctuario de San Antonio, which raised some P1.2 million for the typhoon calamity victims in Sorsogon.

Now, the man behind the concert was Eduardo H. Yap, an active member of the MAP who also happens to be an active volunteer of the parish church.

Del Rosario wants Yap to do it again, and the MAP will again match whatever funds Yap can raise through the concert.

I think I know what Del Rosario and Yap are thinking. You see, we have already forgotten the poor victims in Bicol. Particularly in the business community, the eagerness to send help has almost completely vanished.

Yet the victims need help more than ever.

Metrobank putting up 2 more overseas remittance centers

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST bank, Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company (Metrobank), has secured the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' approval for the setting up of new offshore cash remittance centers in California and Macau.

In a press statement yesterday, Metrobank executive vice president Carmelita Araneta said the establishment of two more remittance centers overseas was in line with the bank's thrust to expand its global presence and extend its services to more overseas Filipino workers communities abroad.

"Macau is an expanding economy that is attracting a large overseas worker population," said Araneta.

The Macau Remittance Center is the newest among Metrobank's network of 11 remittance offices in the Asian region.

The Metro Remittance Center Inc. California is targeted to serve OFWs based in Los Angeles and in San Francisco.

"California has always been a strong market which we are going to pay more attention to. Having a remittance company license will now allow us to expand our coverage in the US more aggressively," she said.

Citing a recent study done by the Philippine Overseas Employment Authority, Araneta said Filipino-Americans were the highest remitters of US dollars in the Philippines.

At present, Metrobank has an international network of nine foreign branches, 23 remittance offices, 37 remittance tie-ups, and more than a thousand correspondent banks. It has presence in the United States, Canada, the Middle East, Taiwan, Shanghai, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Italy, UK, Spain and Austria.

She said Metrobank's name and franchise were a principal competitive advantage because of its strong reputation as the Philippines' financial services industry leader.

For 2006, Metrobank estimated it had captured a 22-percent share of the remittance business. To enhance the service, the bank launched the World Cash Card, a free automated teller machine (ATM) card that allows remittance beneficiaries access to remittance funds at over 700 Metrobank ATMs and over 4,000 BancNet and Megalink terminals in the country. The card is also affiliated with Cirrus Maestro so overseas Filipinos can use it to withdraw cash in any part of the world.

Metrobank has more than 800 domestic and international branches, offices and subsidiaries.

Nissan Motor launches new luxury sedan

NISSAN MOTOR PHILIPPINES Inc. said it had introduced a new luxury sedan called Nissan Teana while preparing for the phaseout of Nissan Cefiro within the year.

NMPI senior manager Raymond Tribdino in an interview clarified that the first was not a replacement for the latter, although this had been the case in other markets overseas such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

In the US market, the new model is introduced as the Nissan Maxima.

"Globally, the Nissan Cefiro has already been phased out," Tribdino said. "Locally, we are doing a 'rebadging' rather than a replacement."

He said NMPI had wanted to retain the Cefiro badge for the new vehicle, but this was not allowed under the Nissan group's rules.

Specifically, NMPI was required to 'rebadge' because the new vehicle was imported in the form of a completely-built unit from Japan.

"Thus, the Teana is the only model now that comes from Japan," he said.

In a prepared statement, the company said it was "redefining the meaning of luxury sedan" through the Nissan Teana, which comes in two 2.3-liter variants-the 230 JM and 230 JK.

"Teana comes from a native American word meaning dawn, as it represents the dawn of an all-new luxury sedan," the firm said.

"Built on the pillars of real world technology, modern design and impeccable quality, the Teana gives a fresh new meaning to elegance," it added.

The 230 JM variant—priced at P1.99 million—has a sunroof, leather interior, vehicle dynamics control and a read CCD cam that activates when the vehicle backs up. At P1.78 million, the 230JK do not have these features.

"With the success of the Nissan Murano in the luxury car segment, we are confident the Teana will follow this lead and carve a niche for itself," said Leman Lee, NMPI president and chief executive. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Consumers still not biting 3G technology, study shows

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NEW ENTRANTS IN TELECOMmunications services should think twice before joining the 3G fray because consumers worldwide are not biting, according to a Canada-based information and communication technology research and advisory firm.

Lauro Vives, president and chief analyst of XMG Inc., said in a statement the firm's recent market trend study showed that a typical phone user would find very little need to use the bandwidth capacity offered by 3G services.

Vives said the study—conducted across North America, Europe and Asia Pacific—showed that 85 percent of the typical phone user's available time for phone use was spent only on SMS messaging and voice calls.

"These finding creates very little opportunity for 3G to corner a significant market share for the time and money of the typical phone user," he said.

Vives said the report also revealed that 3G services accounted for less than 2 percent of the total available time spent by the typical user on mobile phone services.

"3G has been known to offer a potential for supporting the high bandwidth requirements of such applications as streaming and file-sharing applications, he said. "(But) two significant market trends continue to hinder the growth of 3G adoption and usage in these applications."

One is the low utilization of 3G services mainly due to the relatively higher pricing of such services compared to 2G services.

The other is the sufficient capability and cost-competitiveness of alternatives, such as digital broadcast video as an alternative to video streaming and digital broadcast studio as an alternative to Internet radio.

Vives said that while the study presented "insurmountable hurdles" 3G had to face to trigger widespread adoption among typical phone users, XMG's predictive analysis see videoconferencing as one of the drivers for 3G uptake.

"The bottom-line is that there is little opportunity at the moment to successfully create a beachhead for 3G in the marketplace," he said.

"This is a wake up call for non-incumbent telecom service providers if they plan to get into the 3G market at this time just to complete their service portfolio," he added.

PSALM sets out to correct past mistakes

With Transco now valued at about $3B, gov't agency sees no shortage of takers

By Abigail L. Ho

(Last of two parts)

AFTER ITS THIRD ATTEMPT TO PRIVATIZE the National Transmission Corp., the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. took its time before it conduct another auction for the 25-year concession.

After scrapping negotiations with three pre-qualified groups in mid-October 2004, public bidding for the Transco concession did not take place until Feb. 5, 2007.

This time, three bidders also pre-qualified: the joint venture between Citadel Holdings Inc. (60 percent) and Italian firm Terna SPA (40 percent); the consortium of local firm Triratna Holdings Corp. (60 percent), Malaysia's Tenaga Nasional Berhad (5 percent) and Newbridge Asia IV LP (35 percent); and the group of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. (60 percent) and China's State Grid Corp. (40 percent).

SPECIAL REPORT

But when the noon deadline passed on Feb. 5, only the Citadel-Terna consortium managed to submit a final technical and financial bid for the Transco concession.

For the fourth time since 2003, then PSALM president Nieves Osorio declared the bidding a failure.

New concerns

The two other pre-qualified bidders decided to withhold their final bids, citing new issues which they claimed the government had failed to address.

These issues were on top of the lack of franchise and the absence of actual numbers from the Energy Regulatory Commission, which used to be the biggest concerns of previous investors.

The ERC has since submitted the vital figures on which prospective investors may base their revenue forecasts and returns on investments.

The Triratna group—represented by SM Investments vice chair Henry Sy Jr., United Laboratories Corp. chair Joselito Campos Jr. and San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang—had expressed its disappointment over the bidding, saying that PSALM allegedly did not take their comments into consideration, even after three rounds of long and tedious consultations.

"The consortium believes that its requests are highly reasonable as they are entirely consistent with customary terms for an international (merger and acquisition) transaction," the group said.

Triratna's Ang said his group's biggest concern was the "joint and several liabilities clause," which meant that each of the parties involved in the consortium could be held liable for the full amount of any damages that could result from the transaction.

This means that the government can seek to recover the full amount of damages from any of the consortium members, no matter their stake in the company.

Non-issue

But Osorio said that this should no longer be an issue, as PSALM had already resolved this prior to the actual bidding.

She added that the provision will only be in force until an actual concession agreement has been signed between PSALM and the winning bidder. And that would be 12-15 months after the contract award, when the winning bidder has secured a franchise to operate the nationwide transmission grid.

Citadel senior vice president Rogelio Singson, former chair and president of the Bases Conversion Development Authority, said in an interview that his group did not consider that liability clause an issue, explaining that it was not even something that was unique to the Transco concession transaction.

Even the lack of a transferable franchise was not an issue for any of the bidders.

An industry insider expressed surprise that the third public bidding, and the fourth all in all, for the Transco concession ended in failure since PSALM had been quite receptive to the requests and comments of the pre-qualified bidders.

"PSALM definitely listened to them," according to a source privy to the auction. "Up to the last minute, PSALM tried to accommodate them to the maximum extent possible. But the other bidders wanted more concessions from the government. They wanted to have some rules in their favor."

The source said that, for instance, some of the bidders wanted a debt-to-equity ratio of 8:1 or 9:1 or 10:1.

"This led the government to believe that they wouldn't practice prudent financial measures," the source said. "The payment structure requires just a 25-percent down payment, with the remaining 75 percent for financing. They wanted to borrow against the 25 percent. If PSALM gave in to this, this will set a precedent."

The source further said that the Triratna group's concern over the "joint and several liabilities" clause also came as a surprise, as this was not unique to the Transco transaction and could be found among the provisions of other similar transactions.

"Maybe the (Triratna) consortium members were not that comfortable with each other, so they just wanted to be responsible for their own stake," the source said. "Considering what happened during the bidding, PSALM should have just negotiated with the Citadel-Terna group. There wouldn't be anything much to negotiate anyway, except for the price. The transaction documents had already been signed."

No negotiations this time

Citadel's Singson admitted that the final transaction documents that PSALM gave the pre-qualified bidders were less than perfect, but his group was still willing to push through with its bid anyway.

"We've already spent so much time and money on this," Singson said. "We already know what to do. Terna is an experienced transmission grid operator that has been looking for an opportunity to invest in Asia, and this is their opportunity."

He said that since the Citadel-Terna group was the only one that submitted a final bid for the Transco concession, it would be fair if the government would just conduct negotiations with it and not go through another public bidding.

Confirming what the industry source said, Singson went on to say that the consortium had already signed PSALM's transaction documents.

The only consideration would be whether Citadel-Terna's price offer exceeded PSALM's reserve price for the Transco concession.

"We've already conducted three studies on (Transco), with the aid of international consultants who have gone around the country to look at Transco's assets. We already know what we're doing and what we're supposed to do," he said.

The government, however, decided that another public bidding was the way to go. And that a franchise should first be secured before that public auction takes place.

Joint Congressional Power Commission co-chair and Lanao Del Norte Rep. Alipio Cirilo Badelles, however, said that it was unlikely that a franchise would be granted until the winning bidder is identified.

Why secure a franchise?

The industry source said it came as a big surprise that the PSALM board decided to go back to square one, opting to secure a franchise before bidding out the Transco concession, as the lack of a transferable franchise was not a major issue with the three pre-qualified bidders.

"It's possible to have a successful bidding even without a franchise," the source said. "And it's going to be extremely difficult to get a transferable franchise at this time."

OSORIO

LOTILLA

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said securing a franchise before rebidding the concession was part of "good governance."

Also, having a franchise attached to the concession should fetch a higher price for it, he added.

"Even if you rebid without a franchise, you will still need to secure that," Lotilla said. "That's something that we can discuss with lawmakers. Some say that if there is a transferable franchise available, then they are willing to take the risk of applying for it from Congress.

"But it will be best, from an investor's standpoint, that you already have a franchise available, so the value will be higher. There will also be an assurance that the one who will win the bidding will be able to operate it more easily."

In her farewell statement, PSALM's Osorio said a Congressional franchise would "increase the value of the enterprise which, in turn, will provide higher proceeds for the national government."

Her resignation is actually being tied to the failed Transco bidding. This she has denied over and over, but speculations still persist.

As for Congress' stand that it would not issue a franchise until the winning bidder is identified, Lotilla said PSALM could always try again—particularly now that a new Congress would convene after the May elections.

"Let's give the new Congress a chance," Lotilla said.

Still optimistic

Despite its past failures, the government remains optimistic that it can pull off a successful auction.

The Triratna group, for one, remains open to the possibility of participating again in the next public bidding, saying it welcomes the government's decision not to negotiate with the Citadel-Terna consortium.

"We welcome the foresight of the government," said Asish Shastry, managing director for Southeast Asia at Newbridge Capital, one of the members of the consortium.

Even the Citadel-Terna group, which had earlier said it would walk away from the transaction should government decide to rebid, said it would still consider joining the auction.

"We're still considering, depending on how fair the rules are," Citadel's Singson said. "We already know the ins and outs of running Transco, so it will make sense for us to participate in the bidding."

"Our participation will depend on the rules of the game," he added. "If we think the rules are fair, then we'll bid. If not, we probably won't participate anymore."

Lotilla said interest in Transco had increased over the years—a far cry from when almost no entity wanted to bid for the concession almost four years ago.

He related that some investors were even willing to "go north of $3 billion"—more than the most recent valuation of a group led by Sinclair Knight Merz.

Valued loosely at around $2 billion when the Transco concession was first auctioned off, the valuation had gone up to close to $3 billion now.

Lotilla said the PSALM board had yet to decide what provisions in the transaction documents it would tweak, or if any changes would be made at all.

Until the next bidding is announced, which should not be until next year, according to Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda, industry stakeholders and the government would just have to wait for the next episode of the Transco privatization story.

Lotilla said that whatever changes there would be in the transaction documents or in the overall bidding process, at the end of the day, "one needs not only a willing seller, but a willing buyer."

Only when the two are present can the Transco concession be transferred to private sector hands.

Vivant signs deal to acquire Delta P stake

LISTED FIRM VIVANT CORP. HAS SIGNED a memorandum of agreement with Gigawatt Power Inc. (GPI) for the eventual acquisition of a 35-percent stake in local power company Delta P Inc.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Vivant said the signing of the agreement did not mean that it had already acquired Delta P, since GPI had already purchased Delta P, "under terms and conditions (Vivant) is not privy to."

"Only after GPI shall have successfully acquired Delta P may the company pursue the proposed transaction," Vivant corporate secretary Jess Anthony Garcia said.

According to Vivant's initial estimate, the aggregate cost to acquire a 35-percent stake in Delta P is between P34.44 million and P61.27 million.

Vivant intended to use internally generated funds to fund the transaction, the company said.

"Payment is expected to be made in full upon closing," Vivant said. "However, other terms and conditions of the proposed transaction, including, but not limited to, the timetable and schedule for the effectivity of the transaction, are still to be determined after an extensive due diligence examination of Delta P shall have been performed, and depending further on the terms and conditions of the acquisition by GPI of Delta P, to which the company is not privy."

Delta P owns a 16-megawatt bunker-fired diesel generating power plant that generates power for the National Power Corp. in Palawan.

It has 42,069,010 common shares with a par value of P1 per share, all of which have been issued and fully paid up.

Vivant said the proposed transaction would further strengthen its portfolio of investment in the local power sector. *Abigail L. Ho*

Phone vendors' headache comes with a sticker

By Riza T. Olchondra

RETAILERS OF CELLULAR PHONES are urging the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to carefully review its plan to require registration stickers on all handsets for sale, saying it would marginalize them even further.

To get the NTC sticker, phone sellers need to register each unit with the NTC and pay P75 per sticker as proof of registration. The sticker is to be placed on the side of the phone.

The commission said "stickering" would regulate cellular phon e sales to protect buyers handsets that came from legitimate sources. NTC also said "stickering" aims to discourage suppliers from under-declaring the number of units they import.

Greenhills Muslim Traders Association (GMTA) external vice-president Bashier Batara said retailers appreciate the NTC's efforts to address the selling of illegal phones and rampant smuggling of handsets.

But they are concerned about the guidelines.

"We only buy from suppliers, sometimes the units have (IMEI) stickers, sometimes they don't," he said. "We are afraid that the process of registering handsets would just be made more difficult by the new regulation."

The IMEI, or international mobile equipment identifier, is a unique 15-digit number that serves as the serial number of a handset. The number can be found in a sticker placed inside the phone casing.

"(And) how will the guidelines address the sheer volume of handsets for sale?" he said.

According to the draft rules, an individual seller can register five handsets at a time.

"Imagine the cost and effort by the small-time retailer when this is implemented," said Benjamin Abuat, secretary of the GMTA's cellphone section. "We are afraid that the new regulations will marginalize us even more."

Abuat said the group is preparing its collective statement which it would submit to the NTC.

The regulator is currently accepting feedback from groups and individuals regarding the stickers.

Last month, industry stakeholders had expressed their concern that the plan could become a means of simple taxation, raising the prices of handsets.

Atty. Renato M. Lee, legal counsel for Samsung Cellular and First Asian Mobile, said the sticker would pose additional costs to vendors and providers and could be just a form of taxation.

Globe Telecom Inc. vice-president for regulatory affairs Atty. Froilan Castelo agreed with Lee, pointing out that the sticker costs almost as much as an P85 SIM pack that already includes free load.

Other attendees noted that the sticker plan would not address smuggling or cellular phone theft. They said it would just widen the gray market rather than the legitimate market because of a sticker-induced price increase for legitimate handsets.

Meanwhile, the NTC has assured that it will use public feedback to improve guidelines on cellular phone regulation. He added that the price of the sticker is not fixed and that it could be lessened so as not to become a big burden to sellers and, in turn, buyers.

DOE eyes 'less stressful contracts' for Meralco

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY IS looking at using vesting contracts in distributing to various National Power Corp. generation facilities the supply requirements of the Manila Electric Co., as stated in its transition supply contract with the state firm.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that instead of assigning actual contracts to each of the Napocor gencos, the group tasked with making the contract assignments might opt to use "transferable" or "assignable" contracts.

"We're looking at vesting contracts," Lotilla said in an interview with the INQUIRER Business Section. "We won't assign contracts on a per-plant basis. We'll just assign quantities. These contracts will be assignable or transferable."

Napocor president Cyril Del Callar, said using vesting contracts and assigning quantities to each plant, instead of actual supply contracts, would be "less stressful" and require less overhead.

Energy Undersecretary Melinda Ocampo said the proposal would still be discussed. But she said those whose opinions had been sought were inclined towards vesting contracts, instead of actual physical supply contracts attached to each generation facility.

Further discussions would still have to be made with Napocor regarding this, she said.

The final decision would not be made until all details of the capacity assignments had been threshed out, she added.

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has lined up two big-ticket coal-fired generation facilities for auction within the year.

PSALM vice president for asset management and electricity trading Froilan Tampinco said in an earlier interview that the government agency would be rebidding Napocor's Masinloc and Calaca power plants, both rated at 600 megawatts (MW), by the second half.

The rebidding, however, would only take place when both plants had at least 60-70 percent of their dependable capacity covered by power supply contracts, he said.

Both plants had already been auctioned off in the past, with Masinloc even declared sold to YNN Pacific Consortium Inc.

The Calaca plant went through two failed biddings, while the asset purchase agreement between PSALM and YNN for the Masinloc plant had to be terminated when the winning bidder failed to remit the $227-million 40-percent down payment for the plant.

PSALM failed to privatize both plants due to a common reason: the lack of power supply contracts attached to them.

These contracts would assure winning bidders of a ready market for the power that the plants would generate.

Right now, Tampinco said PSALM was just waiting for Napocor to decide how it would allocate demand from a recently signed transition supply contract with Meralco.

Once the allocations for all Napocor plants had been finalized, he said, PSALM could proceed with the issuance of the bid invitations, first for Masinloc, then for Calaca. *Abigail L. Ho*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
SANOFI-AVENTIS PHILIPPINES, INC. 9/F Feliza Bldg., 108 V.A. Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Henri-Olivier Alberic Alain Crombe	Management Accountant
NIPPON EXPRESS PHILIPPINES CORP. Unit 20B, Trafalgar Plaza, 105 H.V. Dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Akihiro Machica	Manager
NEW CONCEPT MANDARIN PHILIPPINES INCORPORATED Lots 2 & 3 Block I BV Romero Blvd., Manila Harbour Center, Radial Rd. 10, Tondo, Manila	Ying Xu	Instructor (Full Time)
R&G CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT AND TRADING INC. Phil-Kor Business Ctr. Bldg., #81 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Parañaque City	Sung Won Seo	Technical Consultant
TEC (TIMES ENGLISH CENTER), INC. 2/F Juliana Bldg., N. Lopez St., Sucat, Parañaque City	Youngpyo Seo	Marketing Manager
S N S TOUR CORP. 2/F 430 Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila	Hyun Kyung Lee	Assistant Operation Manager
PARTY TRAVEL & TOURS # 175 Maysilo Circle, Brgy. Plainview, Mandaluyong City	Seong Jin Seo	Assistant Operation Manager
PARTY TRAVEL & TOURS # 175 Maysilo Circle, Brgy. Plainview, Mandaluyong City	Min Jae Jung	Operation Manager
CORAL BAY NICKEL CORPORATION 24/F Pacific Star Bldg., Makati Ave., cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Masahiro Kamiya	Executive Vice-President to the President

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI – March 6, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE for PICC PROJECTS
RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply to apply for eligibility and to bid and if laer found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title : Proposed Design, Construction and One Year Operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant
Scope of Work : Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision, laboratory testing and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed design, construction and one year operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant all in accordance with the Terms of Reference and the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location : PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget : Twenty Four Milion Pesos (P24,000,000.00)
Source of Funding : BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration : Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)
PCAB License : Registration Particular of at least "Medium A" (Building and Industrial Plant and/or Sewerage and Sewage Treatment / Disposal Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience : Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving design and construction of an STP facility utilizing the Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) Technology one of which costs not less than twelve milion pesos (P12,000,000.00).
In case of a joint venture, submission of a valid joint venture agreement including the special PCAB license is required. The joint venture must have previously completed at least two (2) similar construction projects involving similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.
Certification of Satisfactory Performance : Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects.
For those contractors who have previously done / completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted
Net Financial Contracting Capacity : At least Twenty Four Milion Pesos (P24,000,000.00) *computed at 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)*
Or
Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate : At least Two Milion Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,400,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI) / Eligibility Statement Forms
Cost of Forms : Five Hundred Pesos per set (P500.00/set)
Date of Issuance : March 06 to 14, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission : March 16, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility
Date of Issuance March 26, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Twelve Thousand Pesos (P12,000.00)
Date of Issuance March 26 to 27, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Pre-Bid Conference
Date and Time March 30, 2007 / 10:00 AM
Venue PDMO Conference Room, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St. Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids
Deadline of Submission April 20, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI--March 6 & 13, 2007)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget
1 Lot Two Years Maintenance Service Agreement of 109 Units IBM Diebold 478x ATM Machine for the Period June 1, 2007 to May 31, 2009	P9,156,000.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department (ProcD) starting March 6, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P4,600.00.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at ProcD Conference Room on March 15, 2007 at 2:00 PM, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila. Bidding for the above requirements is scheduled on March 28, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes placed in single outer envelope and sealed accordingly in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the ProcD-Requisitions Management Division at telephone no. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - March 06, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and to bid and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title : Proposed Supply / Installation and Repair of Aluminum Panel Windows at the BSP Main Complex Buildings
Scope of Work : Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed supply / installation and repair of aluminum panel windows at the BSP Main Complex Buildings all in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location : BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini St. cor. P. Ocampo, Manila
Approved Budget : Twenty One Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Pesos (P 21,612,131.00)
Source of Funding : BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration : One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)
PCAB License : Registration Particulars of at least "Medium A" (Building and Industrial Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience : Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving construction with glass and glazing works involving at least three (3) storey building or similar projects. The prospective bidder's largest single completed similar contract must be at least ten million eight hundred ten thousand pesos (P 10,810,000.00)
Certification of Satisfactory Performance : Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects.
For those contractors who have previously done / completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity : At least Twenty One Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Pesos (P 21,612,131.00) *computed as 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started).*
Or
Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate : At least Two Million One Hundred Sixty Two Thousand Pesos (P 2,162,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI) / Eligibility Statement Forms
Cost of Forms : Five Hundred Pesos per set (P 500.00/set)
Date of Issuance : February 26 to March 06, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission : March 09, 2007 / 11:00 AM
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility
Date of Issuance : March 22, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (P 10,800.00)
Date of Issuance March 23 to 26, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Pre-Bid Conference
Date and Time March 30, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Venue MR2A Conference Room, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids
Deadline of Submission April 17, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila.

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility / ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract, including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – February 27 & March 6, 2007)

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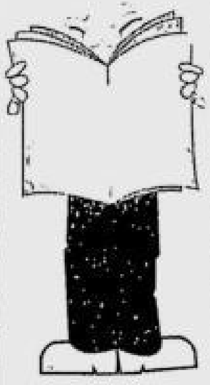

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2 LIVE AUCTION SALE

ON: THURSDAY 8TH MARCH 2007 - 10:30AM SHARP

At.: Henry Butcher Auction Center - LIETZ Industrial Complex, Edison Ave. (P. Leviste), Km. 14, SLEX, Parañaque City

CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIES - KITZ Gate/Butterfly Valves; Victualic Couplings; S.S Elbows; Flanges; Galvanized Equal-Tee's /Tee /Cone/Elbow Reducers; Couplings; Unions; Clean Suits; Fire Hydrant/Springklers; PVC Pipes; Tee's/Elbows/Connectors; 23" Dia. Spiral BI Pipes/Spiral Galvanized Ducting / Connectors; Fiber Glass Insulations; etc.
ELECTRICALS MITSUBISHI AE2000-SS Air Circuit Breaker ; MITSUBISHI VF.20/VF.13 Vacuum Circuit Breaker; MITSUBISHI NV400-SS/ABB SMISSLINE LPICID- S/MERLIN GERIN Multi 9 Circuit Breakers; Type HBH No Fuse Breakers; MCELLER PRZM Contactors; FUJI Electric Arresters; SQUARE D Contactor; OMRON GSP Relays; FERRAZ 32A Fuse Links; Over Current Relays; NATIONAL Outlet; TOSHIBA/NATIONAL Plugs; Relays; Current Coils; EMT Connectors / Couplings; EMT Elbows / Pipes; Condulets; PVC End Caps; Switches;EHB2522B High Bay Lights; G.E./EHB Ballast Assembly Lighting Systems; DELTA Power Capacitors; Panel Boards; Switch Boxes; EAGLE Electric Duplex Receptacles; SANYO DENKI Box 12v/ NMB-MAT 24V Box Fans; etc.
DRY TYPE TRANSFORMERS - 125kva FEDCOR w/ Cooling Fan/50kva, 35kva, 10kva DELTA STAR/125kva; 120kva; 30kva, 20kva, 15kva, 10kva, 7.5kva POWERTECH CORP Transformers; WESCOR; 50.5 Amp/MITSUBISHI CD-40k Current Transformers; Potential Transformers; MITSUBISHI PD-200KPH Voltage Transformer; etc.
AIRCONDITIONING SYSTEMS - Unused ALENAIRE 20TR/15TR Brent Water Cooled Centralized; ALENAIRE Package Type (10TR; 7.5TR; 5TR; 3TR); ALENAIRE Ceiling Concealed; ALENAIRE Condensers/Evaporators; DAIKEN 2Hp, 1.5Hp; ¾ Hp Window Type; CARRIER 2Hp Floor Mounted; CARRIER 2Hp Ceiling Mounted; MCQUAY Ahu Midea Portable; etc.
MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENTS - DAIKEN Air Cleaners; MITSUBISHI Industrial Sewing Machines; Computer Monitors; Cpu's; Printers; GOLDSTAR GHX-1840 / 3096 Hybrid Key Tel. System; XEROX VIVACE 230 Copier; Fax Machines; Laptop Computers; Ceiling Fans; Kitchen Equipment; S.S. Restaurant Equipment; Industrial Fan Blowers; HOFFMAN CENTRIFUGAL Exhaust; Asstd. Tiles; Cornice; Sealer Strips; Artificial Plants; TV Sets; TV Stands; Coffee Tables; Telephone Hand Sets; Modular Tables; Cabinets; Steel Frame Chairs; XBOX Microsoft Video Game; Tennis Table; Badminton Poles; Acoustic Guitars; Collapsible Swing, etc.

On View: Wednesday 7th March 2007 - 9am to 5pm & morning of sale day
Refundable Deposit: Php5,000 (upon registration)

ON: THURSDAY 15TH MARCH 2007 - 10:30AM SHARP

At.: Henry Butcher Auction Center - LIETZ Industrial Complex, Edison Ave. (P. Leviste), Km. 14, SLEX, Parañaque City

POWER TOOLS - OZITO Arc Welders; OZITO Cordless Drills; Wet & Dry Vacuum Cleaner; Hedge Trimmers; Wheeled Lawn Mowers; Spray Guns; Bottle Jacks 2Tons & 3Tons Cap; GMB Pressure Washers/Chain Saws; Unused Electrical Hoist; YALE Chain Blocks/Lever Blocks; Geared/Plain Overhead Trolloys; Submersible Pumps; etc.
ELECTRICAL - WORTHINGTON Air Compressor; AHSLEYROCK Circuit Breaker
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On View: Wednesday 14th March 2007 - 9am to 5pm & morning of sale day
Refundable Deposit: Php5,000 (upon registration)
For further information please contact Carol Cosca at Tel: 049-834-6541
Email: carol.cosca@henrybutcher.com

GoIndustry Henry Butcher
HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES INC.
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E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com
Website: www.henrybutcher.com/www.goindustry.com

OBITUARIES

TAN CHUNG KIAT

of Amoy, China

Founder of KCC MALL of MARBEL
and KCC MALL of GENSAN

peacefully joined our Creator
on March 3, 2007 at the age of 82.

His loving wife **HADJA DUNGA "LAILA" TY**; children **Josefina** & **Chan Shui Lam** and **Jocelyn** & **Rey Chiang**; grandchildren **Aaron, Arvin, Alain, Krystal, Ariel, Jennica, Rainnyl, Reivynn** together with his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Memorial services will be held at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. The remains will be transferred to General Santos City on March 7, 2007 and will be viewed at Anita V. Funeral Homes, Santiago Boulevard, General Santos City.

Interment will be on Monday, March 12, 2007 at General Santos Chinese Cemetery.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF

THE PHILODRILL CORPORATION

(formerly PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS DRILLING & OIL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION)

CONDOLE WITH THE FAMILY OF OUR FOUNDER AND FORMER CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT

HENRY A. BRIMO

Who peacefully joined our Lord
on March 3, 2007 at the age of 94.

He lies in state at the Santuario
De San Jose, Greenhills.

The funeral Mass will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 7, 2007 at the Santuario de San Jose. Interment will follow at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

We request your prayers for the
eternal repose of his soul.

The Board of Directors, Officers and Employees
of

Philex Mining Corporation

sincerely condole with the family of

HENRY A. BRIMO

Chairman Emeritus and Founder

who peacefully joined his Creator on
March 3, 2007 at the age of 94.

His beloved wife, **Ma. Paz Roces Sotelo**; children and in-laws, **Jerry & Jessica**, **Henry Jr. & Kiku**, **Robert (†) & Hiroko**, **Stephen**; his grandchildren, **Stephanie**, **Danielle**, **Nicole**, **Matthew**, **Michael**, **Nicholas**, and **Alyssa**, request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

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GCash inter-exchange m-commerce hub draws raves at 3GSM World Congress

All of the world's major telecommunications companies gathered in Barcelona recently for the prestigious 3GSM World Congress, where the Philippines' own GCash was on prominent display. Powered by G-Xchange, Inc. (GXI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom, GCash is an integrated mobile payment system that first gained international acclaim by winning the Best Messaging Service Category at the 2005 GSM Awards.

"We are uniquely proud to unveil the world's first Inter-exchange Hub with the potential to deliver seamless m-commerce between territories, and we thank the international community for its warm and overwhelming acceptance of our pioneering efforts," said GXI President Rizza Maniego-Eala.

At a raised booth in the Second Hall of the Fira de Barcelona, GXI set up a Proof of Concept with its technology partner, UTIBA, along with Singapore's SingTel, Hong Kong's CSL, Malaysia's Maxis, and a Norwegian telco, showcasing the interconnection of various m-commerce platforms to enable mobile subscribers to make multi-currency remittances using their mobile phones almost anywhere in the world via SMS through their local SIMs.

> *"This would be a great service for both banked and unbanked people."*
>
> Omar Hashem
> Cash Management Department Head
> National Commercial Bank of
> Saudi Arabia.

"This would be a great service for both banked and unbanked people," said Omar Hashem, Cash Management Department Head at the National Commercial Bank of Saudi Arabia.

GCash also drew the attention of industry observers who were keen on the latest technological developments especially around the GCash multiple currency remittance system which would be an immense benefit to the large number of migrant workers in many countries.

"Globe Telecom shares and supports GXI's vision of improving lives through technology. We are excited about having pushed innovation further by unveiling our inter-exchange m-commerce hub as a further development to the GCash platform launched in 2004," noted Ferdz M. dela Cruz, Globe Telecom's Consumer Business Group Head.

The recently concluded 3GSM World Congress is a highly anticipated annual event that gathers the world's top telecommunications innovators and operators. It is the world's largest exhibition and congress for the international mobile industry.

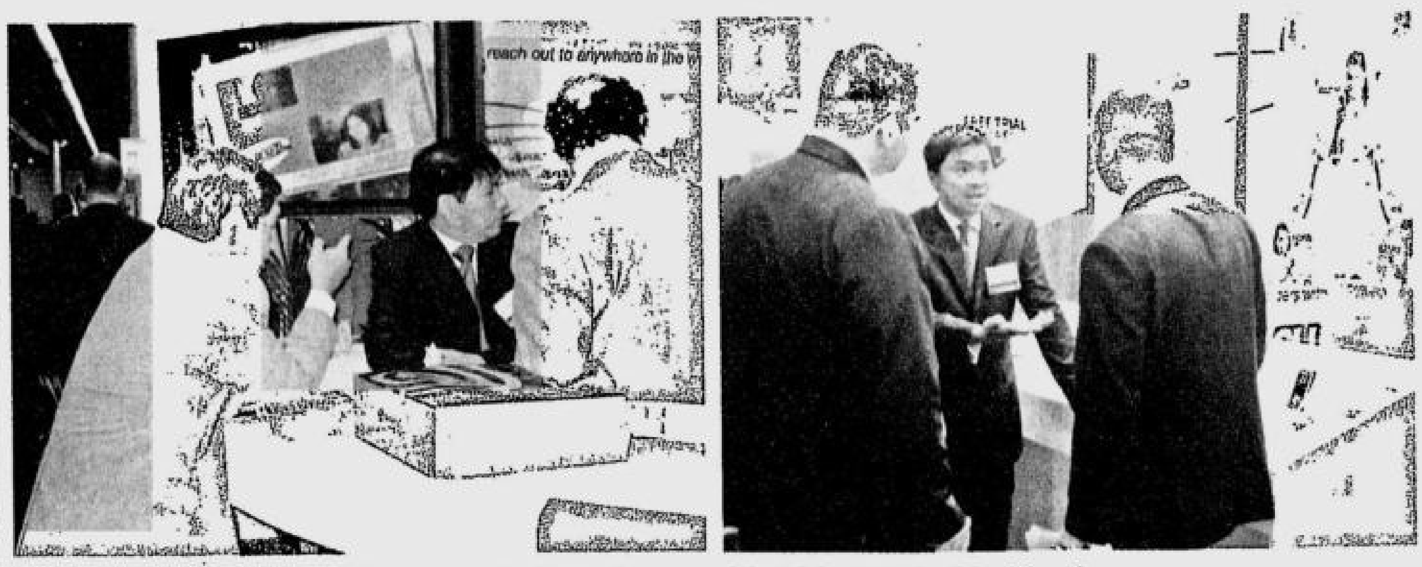
GCASH

Build bridge
live without boru
GCAS

L-R: Gregg Marshall, UTIBA Sales & Business Development Head for Asia, Rizza Maniego-Eala, GXI President, Ferdz dela Cruz, Globe Telecom Consumer Business Group Head, James Ileto, GXI Int'l Licensing & Business Dev't (ILBD) Project Manager

L-R: Emelissa Diloy, GXI Marketing Manager, Fernando Teodoro, Globe Telecom Innovation Development Head, Rizza Maniego-Eala, GXI President, Shydee Buizon-Tiambeng, Globe Telecom Services Innovation Delivery & Support Head, Jojo Vega, GXI ILBD Head, James Ileto, GXI ILBD Project Manager, Rodell Garcia, Globe Telecom Chief Information Officer

L-R: Ferdz dela Cruz, Globe Telecom Consumer Business Group Head, Gregg Marshall, UTIBA Sales & Business Development Head for Asia, Richard Matotek, UTIBA CEO, Jojo Vega, GXI ILBD Head, James Ileto, GXI ILBD Project Manager


reach out to anywhere in the

Telco industry leaders gather around the trial area of the GCash booth.

FREE TRIAL HERE!
GCASH

GCash was a crowd favorite at the Congress, where businessmen representing some of the world's top telcos lauded the further innovation around the GCash inter-exchange m-commerce hub.

IN THIS ISSUE
- **The landscape** that you are /D1
- **Tina Juan's 'bone robbers'** Part two /D4

LIFESTYLE
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MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ● WEDNESDAY **2BU** ● THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Cure is all about compliance

Text & photos by Linda B. Bolido

THE PHILIPPINE delegation in the Valencia osteoporosis conference was composed of Dr. Cora Ngelangel, Christopher Ramirez, Dr. Llewelyn Hao, Dr. Miles Francis de la Rosa, Joe Marie L. Sy, Doctors Zayda and Gil Gamilla, Nick Pallingayan and Sanirose Orbeta.

SCIENCE MAY BE coming up with more effective and more convenient new cures everyday but, as a recent meeting of experts indicated, whether or not a patient benefits from them remains primarily his/her responsibility.

At the Osteoporosis Experts Forum, "Progress in Osteoporosis Care: Reaching New Heights," in Valencia, Spain, the recurring theme was compliance, compliance, compliance.

The conference was organized by Roche Pharmaceuticals and GlaxoSmithKline.

While medical authorities touted the merits of the new medication for the bone problem, Ibandronic acid (commercial name is Bonviva), they also underscored the fact that cure eventually boiled down to the patient's willingness to follow the treatment regimen and take the correct dosage.

Osteoporosis or brittle bone is a condition that makes people more vulnerable to fractures that may not only cause disability but even death.

More at risk

Menopausal women have been found to be particularly vulnerable to this problem.

Pierre D. Delmas, a professor of medicine and rheumatology in Lyon, France, said: "Preventing fracture is key to treating post-menopausal osteoporosis." Age and a previous fracture, or fractures, increase the risk of getting another fracture.

Other risk factors include family medical history (genetics), low bone mass density and lifestyle, including smoking and excessive alcohol use.

Unfortunately, Dr. Rick Adachi, a professor in Ontario, Canada, said: "Close to 75 percent of people who have had a fracture are not treated."

And as Dr. Rene Rizzoli of Geneva, Switzerland, stressed, even if people get the necessary medication "it does not work if patients do not take it in the correct way and for the right length of time."

He cited studies that showed low numbers of patients persisting in medication. In one study, after two years, only about half of the patients were still taking their medicine.

Dr. Socrates E. Papapoulos of the

CURE/ C4

> Even the best of medications can only work if the patient takes it the correct way and for the prescribed length of time

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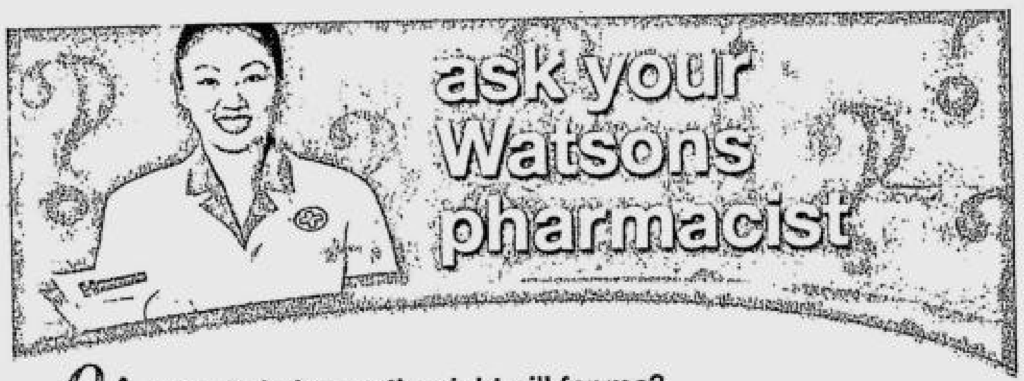


ask your Watsons pharmacist

Q: How do I choose the right pill for me?

A: Consult a health provider to guide you in choosing the pill formulation that best suits you. Some oral pills are low-dose and easily tolerated. Progestin-only pills are safe for breastfeeding moms. There is a new pill in the market that protects you from unplanned pregnancy, and clears and smoothens your skin.

Q: Is it true that some of the side effects of the pill are weight gain and even the development of cancer or cysts?

A: Recent studies show that the pill does not cause weight gain . It has also been proven that oral contraceptives protect you from certain types of cancer like ovarian and endometrial cancer. A common discomfort related with the use of pills is slight nausea in the first three months.

Source. Gallo MF, Lopez LM Grimes DA, Schulz KF, Helmerhost FM. Combination contraceptives: effects on weight. The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2006, issue1. Art No.:CD003987. pub2. DOI:10.1002/4561858.pub2

Q: Where can I buy the oral contraceptive pill that also clears and smoothens skin? Can I buy this without a prescription? Is there an affordable option?

A: It is important to consult a health provider before taking any pill. Your health provider will prescribe the pill that suits you best. The TRUST Family Program offers the most affordable pill that protects you from pregnancy, and clears and smoothens your skin.

TRUST FAMILY PROGRAM
For more information on the TRUST Family Program products, call (02)6333-TFP / 633-3837 / Text (0917) 823-1111 or log on to www.tfp.com.ph or visit your Watsons pharmacist.

pharmacy self care
Watsons

Watsons Pharmacy Self-Care Program aims to raise awareness about relevant health issues, and educate you through professional health information and advice. Our friendly pharmacists are always ready to assist you, especially when it concerns you and your family's health.

rf Lichtenstein
BMW Art Car by Roy Lichtenstein
Some works of art are truly moving.
BMW Art Cars on tour / 03.06.07-03.31.07 / AYALA MUSEUM. MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES
Initiated by

RAINE Romero, Claire Petierre, emcee of the affair Geoff Rodriguez and Joy Gatbalite

CELINE Pineda, Mia Tengco and Adchoo Ilagan of girl band Wake Up Your Seatmate

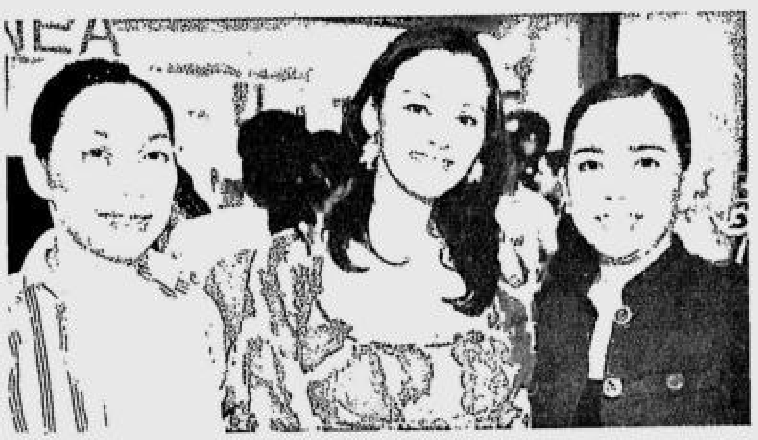
NESTLÉ HOTSHOTS. SVP and business executive manager Eugene David; Nestlé AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager Tina Samaco; and Nestea brand events specialist Gabby Posadas

MARO Rabanal and Hannah Paula Yulo of Microtel Inns and Suites Boracay

CAROL Lobaton of Mikasa

PONCH Zamora

Prepare to plunge into an exciting summer


AYALA Malls senior division manager Myrna Fernandez; celebrated bag designer Amina Aranaz; and Greenbelt operations manager AC Ocampo

CIARA Marasigan

DESIGNER Arnel Papa, INQUIRER's enni Epperson and Liza Elarde, editor of Jetset Magazine

DESIGNER Emie Jorge

CINDERELLA'S Marielle Santos, attractive Alexi Alunan and Century Tuna's Leo Po

AUDREY Tan-Zubiri and mother Dette Tan

HAPPY David and Mary Ann Cua

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

SUMMER HAS arrived, *palanggas*, and, as in the past, Nestea was the official drink during and after the Nestea Beach 2007, the season's grandest and hottest event, dahlings.

The affair was hosted by handsome television personality **Geoff Rodriguez**, who explained how Nestea Beach 2007 would feature more competitive beach volley matches among the country's best collegiate teams, as well as lots of cool parties, electrifying concerts, and a beach cleanup campaign dubbed "Love the Beach" to be conducted in Puerto Galera and Boracay.

Naturellement, hotshots of Nestlé were *tres, tres* visible, dahlings, like **Eugene David**, Nestlé and Nestea's senior vice president and business executive manager; **Joey Quimbo**, vice president for marketing promotions and events; *la simpatica* **Tina Samaco**, AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager; **Gabby Posadas**, Nestea brand events specialist; and **Pyrus de la Cruz**, Nestea category manager.

Under a partnership between Nestea and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), part of the proceeds from sales of Nestea items during the Nestea Beach 2007 would go to the cleanup and preservation of our country's beaches through PBSP's coastal rehabilitation program, said the enthusiastic Tina S. Not bad, huh?

And, hey, check this out! Nestea Beach 2007 has an ongoing promo that gives Nestea drinkers a chance to win one free trip to Hawaii for four with US$3,000 pocket money and three free trips for two to Boracay.

La Salle Greenhills is the place to be for sizzling beach volley competition as 48 teams from 33 colleges and universities take to the sand courts for the elimination rounds scheduled March 21-23 for Luzon teams, March 27-28 for Visayas teams and March 29-30 for Mindanao teams.

The semifinal and championship rounds will be held April 19-21 in sunny Bora, *natch*!

Nestea Beach 2007 is sponsored by Speedo, Mikasa, Villa de Oro Boracay Beach Resort Hotel, Boracay Mandarin Island Hotel, Boracay Gold Crowne Club, Microtel Inns and Suites Boracay, Hey! Jude @D' Mall, D' Mall D' Boracay, La Salle Greenhills, Schering Plough Coppertone and Crystal Sand, *palanggas*.

Aranaz at Greenbelt 5

Another dazzling jewel has been added to the eye-catching Greenbelt area, *palanggas*. The high-end Greenbelt 5, dahlings, is set to open its first phase in the last quarter of the year. Top local designers who will be opening boutiques in Greenbelt 5 exhibited their elegant products like the talented **Amina Aranaz**, designer **Arnel Papa**, **Patrice Ramos-Diaz**, **Jun Escario**, **Randy Ortiz**, **Jojie Lloren**, **Joey Samson**, **Dennis Lustico**, **Ivarluski Aseron**, **Vic Barba**, **Emie Jorge**, **Lulu Tan-Gan**, **Lila Almario**, **Ana Rocha** and **Michi Calica**.

Native materials were showcased in the modern designs of the gorgeous bags of Amina A.

"'De-ethnicize' the ethnic, I always say. Our pieces have a unique artisan-like feel with pleasantly surprising details like sparkling crystals, luxurious fabrics, leather, mother of pearl and coconut shell that make them even more special," Amina said.

While the Aranaz bags have been available locally in select outlets and in small boutiques in the United States, Singapore, Korea and Japan, the Greenbelt 5 outlet will be the label's first freestanding store, and where Amina will offer her first-ever made-to-order and bridal bag services.

"We hardly accommodated made-to-order requests in the past. However, at Greenbelt 5, we will finally open our doors to them."

With this new destination at the Ayala Malls, our talented designers of clothes, bags and shoes now have a sanctuary at Greenbelt 5. The works of the country's best talents will now showcased alongside international luxury brands, dahlings.

Hey, *palanggas*, check out the Greenbelt 3 lobby now and take a peek at what's in store for you at Greenbelt 5, before it finally opens its doors to all fashion enthusiasts.

Beyond Bamboo

Tons of invitees fell in love with Beyond Bamboo's one-of-a-kind display. Hardworking owners, the eye-catching sisters **Sheila Romero** and **Trisha Bermudez**, carefully handpicked each item in the collection during their travels.

Fab lamps made of solid onyx stone; lamps in fine hammered silver that you cannot find anywhere in *Manille*, dahlings; ceramic vases and jars with fabulous designs but reasonably priced; luxurious leather products like trash bins, serving trays, tissue paper holders and magazine bags were displayed.

The bath and body collection from Provence called "Lothantique," exclusively carried by Beyond Bamboo, had me going gaga.

The scent of the Green Tea Eau de Toilette and the Verbena massage oil was *tres* popular. The room-spray line in vanilla, cinnamon orange and ginger is a must-have, *palanggas*.

"It has only been a year [since we opened] yet many of today's hip interior designers and popular architects get their custom-made furniture and one-of-a-kind accessories from Beyond Bamboo," said a very happy Sheila R.

Check out Beyond Bamboo at 2/F, Doña Consolacion Building, 122 Jupiter St., Makati; or call 8908191 and 8907680.

It is a winner, *palanggas*.

Tea and Therapy

This tea house is different.

Mac Co Holdings opened its latest venture, the cool Tea and Therapy Salon at Serendra, Fort Bonifacio, *palanggas*. This tea shop offers a variety of fantastic healing blends for a healthier lifestyle according to **Lelet Acosta**, operations manager of Mac Co Holdings, the group that brought to the Philippines the popular Häagen-Dazs Ice Cream and the one-of-a-kind Max Brenner's Chocolate Bar, dahlings.

"We are very excited to open our first tea salon," said Lelet A. "Our goal here at Tea and Therapy is to introduce our customers to the good and healthy practice of tea drinking. We are committed to meeting the needs of our customers while using top-quality ingredients."

For many of us, tea is fast becoming the healthy beverage of choice. A "tea lifestyle" is emerging in cities all over the country and we are now discovering what the Brits and Chinese have known for centuries.

Hey, tea is an honest to goodness health drink with many benefits, depending on the type of tea consumed, *palanggas*.

For those who want a little something to munch on while having their health drink, the shop has a line of superbly prepared international bento boxes: French, Italian, Thai, Indian, Hainanese, as well as vegetarian.

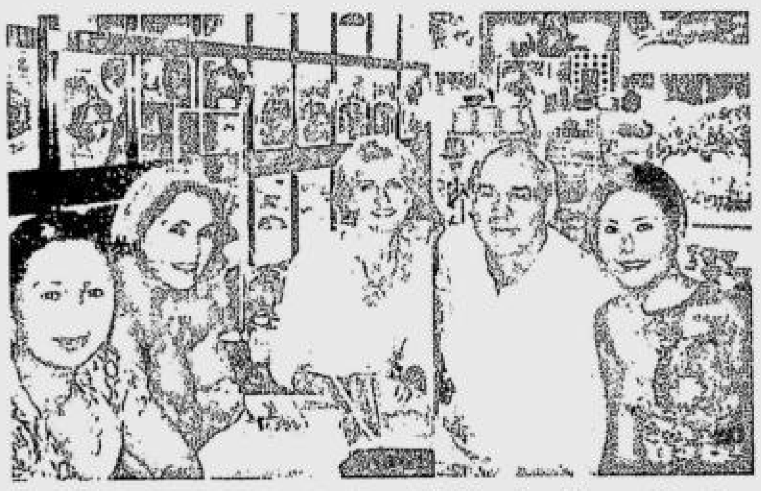
The variety of excellent dessert cakes, including the store's signature Green Tea Tiramisu, are also linked to tea, *palanggas*.

Over 80 different types of tea from all over the world are available, *palanggas*, classified under Healers, Calmers, Rejuvenators, Fortifiers, Energizers and Slimmers. They are all there in this beautifully decorated tea salon where even the gorgeous chandeliers have special tea-inspired designs, would you believe?

Check it out, *palanggas*. It's awesome!

LILY PO, popular Boracay Mandarin Island Hotel and Nestea category manager, and Pyrus de la Cruz

LAYDEE Pascua and Edelyn Llanila of Speedo


GEMMA Gemayel, Carolyn Masibay, Julie Manning, Warner Manning, and working socialite and owner Ruth Co

STOCK-BROKER queen, Vivian Yuchengco

TEA DRINKERS and health buffs Toni Gregory and Georgie Diaz Balliet with PDI's team, *moi* and Cory Quirino

MARK and Stephanie Frondoso

BAMBOO FOLLOWERS. Luchie Chanco, Chris Cruz and Peewee Lapid

OWNERS of the successful Beyond Bamboo Shop. Sisters two, Trisha Bermudez and Sheila Romero

SHAMAINE and Bertrano Ng of Hoseki

ARCHITECT J. Calma

MONICA and architect JP Calma

MEGA businessman Mikee Romero

DR. ARNEL Nuguid

SMART'S Ricky Isla

Nobel Peace Prize nominee to talk on health and happiness

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE nominee Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is making his first ever visit to the Philippines in April.

He is the founder of the Art of Living Foundation, which is making an impact in over 140 countries. Art of Living offers workshops that combine ancient wisdom and modern science.

The foundation seeks to help individuals achieve their full potential with an emphasis on holistic living and personal self-development.

Over 300 Filipinos have taken Art of Living courses since the Philippine chapter was organized in 2005.

While in Manila, Shankar will personally conduct a Health and Happiness workshop April 25-27, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Isla Ballroom, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

The three-day program includes yoga, meditation and powerful breathing techniques. It aims to help relieve stress, anxiety and depression, and promote health, well being and peace of mind.

Shankar will also give a talk at the "Evening of Wisdom, Music and Meditation," to be held April 24, 6 p.m., at the Isla Ballroom, Edsa Shangri-La hotel. Admission is free.

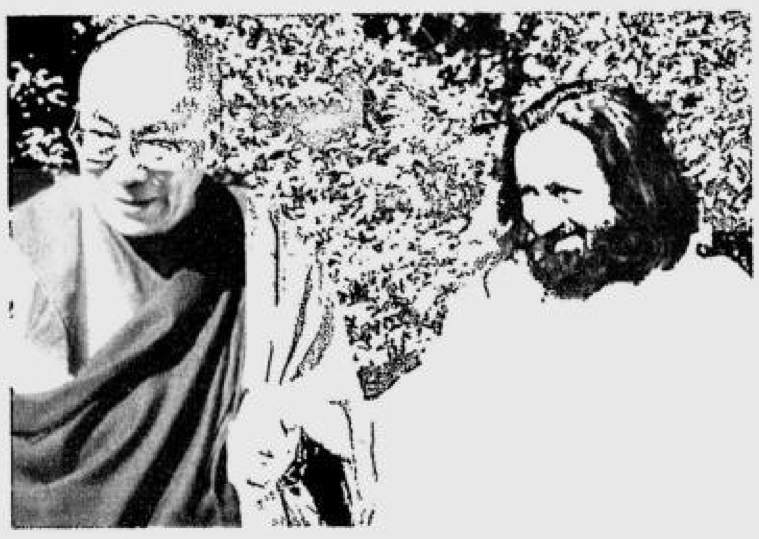
Shankar has addressed various global institutions including the United Nations, World Economic Forum, European Parliament and International Anti-corruption Conference. He has also spoken in leading academic and research institutions in the United States including the National Institutes of Health, National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Space Flight Center, Yale University, University of California in Los Angeles, UC Berkeley and Columbia University.

He promotes global peace through service and fostering of human values.

Shankar has designed several self-development programs that cater to every age group and section of society thereby helping millions of people handle day to day stresses and strains. People who attend the workshops say they experience more joy and enthusiasm in their lives, better heath and interpersonal relationships.

INQUIRER columnist Jaime Licauco wrote, "The effect of just the first day was very good. I felt completely relaxed and at peace; my blood pressure, usually elevated, dropped even before I took my regular medication. My head cleared up."

Another recent graduate of the Part 1 course, Crisan Celdra, said: "The Art of Living course is like gifting someone with fresh eyes, a new heart and a beautiful life... And I feel blessed to receive such a present." Shankar said, "Life is sacred—celebrate life. Care for others and share what you have with those less fortunate than you. Broaden your vision because the whole world belongs to you." The Art of Living website is www.artofliving.org.ph.


SRI Sri Ravi Shankar with the Dalai Lama

ART of Living graduates at the monthly group follow-up sessions

TOP FINISHERS. Pastor Emata and Leo Oracion, first two Filipinos to reach the peak of Mount Everest

Diet supplement for Everest climbers

THE FIRST PHILIPPINE MOUNT EVEREST expedition is now preparing for this year's Unity Climb that will attempt to reach the summit from both sides of the mountain. Leo Oracion and Pastor Emata, the first Filipinos to reach the top of Everest, and the rest of the team are currently undergoing rigorous training.

To prepare for the tough climb, they are supplementing their diet with Rhodiola, a new herbal supplement.

Rhodiola is a one-capsule-takes-on-all herbal energizer. Among its cited benefits are:

1. Control of stress-related illness
2. Restoration of balance in the immune system and hormone levels
3. Prevention of heart disease, cancers, disruption of the immune system and respiratory system; enhancement of physical and emotional performance
4. Brain food

Researchers have reportedly found that Rhodiola has anti-radiation, anti-fatigue, anti-hypoxia (oxygen deficiency), antioxidant and detoxifying properties.

Other reported benefits include an ability to enhance the performance of the central nervous system and endocrine system for better memory and endurance. In the mountains, in extreme cold, Rhodiola is expected to help level out the athletes' system.

Those who take Rhodiola are reportedly physically and mentally healthier. In a recent double-blind, placebo-controlled pilot study, a preparation of Rhodiola root extract showed a positive effect on physical fitness, and mental and neuro-motoric abilities of students during a stressful examination compared to a group on placebo.

It was reportedly also found that the general well-being of Rhodiola takers was significantly higher than the placebo group.

Rhodiola contains 18 amino acids essential for proper body function. RhodiolaBG is made of 100-percent natural herbs and Rhodiola rosea. It is ideal for everyday use and is completely legal (no steroids). It has been found to be safe enough to be combined with other health supplements. RhodiolaBG, available at Mercury Drug and leading drugstores nationwide, may be a convenient source of sustained and optimum energy.

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PROMO MECHANICS

A. PROMO PERIOD: JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31, 2007

B. PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS:

1) You can participate in the nationwide raffle promo by submitting the required EQ packs such as EQ Basic (with 100% Breathable Cover and Side Leak Guards), EQ Plus, EQ Colors and EQ Dry (with Cloth-like Cover) in an envelope, together with the information sheet that contains your name, address, contact numbers, signature and your baby's name, birthday and age.

2) Entries may be submitted through a) drop boxes deployed in selected supermarkets/groceries nationwide; b) major Jollibee Party Stores; and, c) mailing or hand-carrying to JSU Office at any of the following branches:

1) JSU MAIN OFFICE
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc.
31st Floor Raffles Corporate Center
Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center,
Pasig City 1605

2) JSU CEBU
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc. – Cebu
Lot 2 Blk. 9 M.L. Quezon Ave. Castalex
Compound, Cabangcalan, Mandaue City,
Cebu 6014

3) JSU CDO
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc. – Warehouse
Kevin Ent. Warehouse Zone 4 Bayabas Road,
Cagayan de Oro City 9000

3) One (1) RAFFLE ENTRY is equivalent to any of the following EQ packs:

A. EQ Basic Baby Diapers	No. of Packs Required
EQ Basic Singles (1)	4
EQ Basic/ EQ Plus Mini Packs (4s)	2
EQ Basic/ EQ Plus Budget Pack (12s)	1
EQ Basic/ EQ Plus Big Pack (36s, 32s, 28s, 24s)	1
B. EQ Colors Baby Diapers	
EQ Colors Mini Packs (4s)	2
EQ Colors Budget Pack (18s, 16s, 14s, 12s)	1
C. EQ Dry Baby Diapers	
EQ Dry Mini Packs (4s)	2
EQ Dry Travel Pack (22s, 20s, 18s, 16s, 14s)	1
EQ Dry Econo Pack (40s, 36s, 32s, 28s)	1
EQ Dry Jumbo Pack (60s, 54s, 48s, 42s)	1
EQ Dry Mega Pack (84s, 72s)	1

4) Each entry should contain the number of corresponding EQ packs. Chosen entry with incomplete number of packs will be disqualified.

C. RAFFLE PRIZES:

Each winner will receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth Six Thousand Pesos (P6,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Cake certificate worth Five Hundred Pesos (P500).

D. DRAW SCHEDULES:

1) Entries will be classified into five (5) areas: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
2) You are required to drop your entries within the area covered by your mailing address. Otherwise, winning entries will be disqualified. (e.g. 123 Gov. Pack Rd. cor. Upper Session Rd. Baguio City should be submitted at any North Luzon dropbox centers only).
3) Deadline for submission of entries and the corresponding draw dates are as follows:

	Deadline of Submission	Draw Date	No. of Winners
1st Monthly Draw	Jan. 31, 2007	Feb. 9, 2007, 3PM	50 winners
2nd Monthly Draw	Feb. 28, 2007	Mar. 9, 2007, 3PM	50 winners
Grand Draw	Mar. 31, 2007	Apr. 10, 2007, 3PM	100 winners

4) All entries will be drawn at the following JSU Offices at exactly 3 o'clock in the afternoon and will be attended by JSU and DTI representatives.
a) For GMA and Luzon Entries - JSU Pasig Warehouse
b) For Visayas Entries - JSU Cebu
c) For Mindanao Entries - JSU CDO
5) For the 1st and 2nd Monthly Draws, 10 Free Birthday Party Packages will be given in each of the 5 areas (i.e., GMA, South Luzon, North Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). For the Grand Draw, 20 Free Birthday Party Packages will be given per area.
6) Promo participants can only win once within the entire promo duration. Non-winning entries in the 1st and 2nd Monthly Draws will still be included in the Grand Draw.
7) Entries thru mail will only be accepted until the following date and time for each draw.
a) 1st Draw: February 8, 2007, 5PM
b) 2nd Draw: March 8, 2007, 5PM
c) Grand Draw: April 10, 2007, 9AM

E. CLAIMING OF PRIZES:

1) Winners in each draw will be announced in major broadsheets.
2) Within a week after each draw, all winners will be informed through a NOTIFICATION LETTER which will be delivered straight to their houses through Worklink. Worklink will present all the acknowledgement receipts to JSU.
3) Winners can claim their Jollibee birthday party certificates from February 8, 2007 to October 31, 2007 at any of the specified JSU offices near their location.
a) After the redemption period, JSU will mail the prizes through courier.
b) Said service partner shall present the acknowledgement receipts to JSU.
4) Winners will be asked to present their notification letter plus 2 valid IDs for verification purposes.
5) Winners can use their birthday party certificates at their chosen Jollibee party store from February 8, 2007 to December 31, 2008 only.
6) Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
7) Employees of UNITRADE and JOLLIBEE, its advertising agencies and suppliers, including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the Raffle Promo.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4960, Series of 2006.

rf Lichtenstein
Some works of art are truly moving.

BMW Art Cars on tour / 03.06.07-03.31.07 / AYALA MUSEUM, MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES
BMW Art Car by Roy Lichtenstein
Initiated by

FRESH fruit juice in a jiffy with the low-speed (at least 80 RPM) non-metal blade juice extractor Matstone, available at all branches of True Value, Shopwise and Rustan's. Call 3623396 local 837; or e-mail matstone@ iajcorp. com.

Fresh is better, study says

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS CAN BENEFIT health-wise from drinking 100-percent fresh fruit juices, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association.

The research from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences adds strong evidence that fresh fruit juice consumption is not linked to weight and growth problems in children.

"Consuming 100-percent fresh fruit juice has been positively associated with children achieving recommended nutrient intake," said Miami-based registered dietitian and ADA spokesperson Sheah Rarback in the website www.juiceproducts.org. The research also notes that at around age 7 children's consumption of 100-percent real juice flatlines and is replaced with beverages that have significantly less or no nutritional value.

What can parents do?

The earlier they start, the easier it will be to get the children used to the taste of fresh juices. They should also try to include a variety of fruits so children do not get bored with their fresh juice. Organic fruits are ideal, but if selection or sources are limited, parents should purchase what they can as long as the fruit is fresh.

PARTICIPANTS take a break outside the Congress Palace, a Valencia architectural showpiece.

Cure is all about compliance

From page C1

Netherlands noted that people with osteoporosis often asked how long the treatment would last, a question people with other long-term medical problems like hypertension did not raise.

Dr. Jorge Cannata-Andia of Spain stressed that long-term treatment was dependent not just on the drug's efficacy but also on the patient's adherence to and compliance with the regimen.

Monthly dose

Roche's once-monthly drug for the prevention and cure of osteoporosis was formulated precisely to make it easier for people to stick to their treatment regimen. It is available in 150-mg tablet form. Research suggested that more people tended to skip daily or weekly medication.

In a further effort to address this problem, Joe Marie L. Sy, Roche (Philippines) Inc. marketing director, says the company is introducing in the second half of the year an injectable, which can make life even easier for osteoporosis sufferers as it will have to be administered only once every quarter or every three months.

Rizzoli said consistent medication could be assured through effective communication with patients. Practical solutions could be drawn up to help patients stay on the treatment.

While reducing frequency of treatment had already been addressed, as exemplified by Roche's once-a-month and, soon, the quarterly injectable, he also recommended a multidisciplinary approach to finding solutions to the problem of treatment dropout.

Locally, Roche has taken the initiative to make people comply with their treatment regimen.

It has come up with an exclusive patient support program through its Bon Diva Women's Campaign for Bone Health, with former Miss Universe Gloria Diaz as endorser.

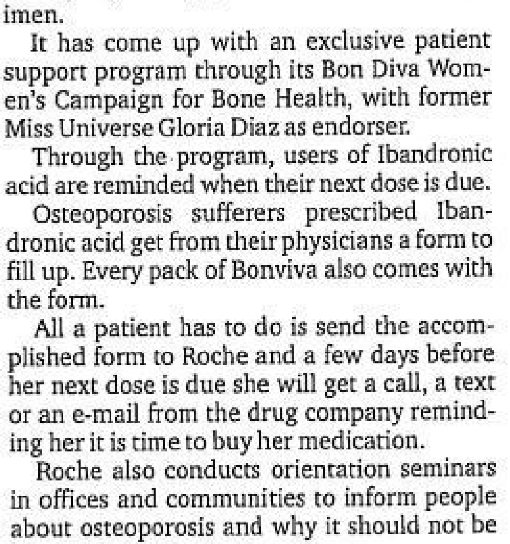
Through the program, users of Ibandronic acid are reminded when their next dose is due.

Osteoporosis sufferers prescribed Ibandronic acid get from their physicians a form to fill up. Every pack of Bonviva also comes with the form.

All a patient has to do is send the accomplished form to Roche and a few days before her next dose is due she will get a call, a text or an e-mail from the drug company reminding her it is time to buy her medication.

Roche also conducts orientation seminars in offices and communities to inform people about osteoporosis and why it should not be taken lightly.

Sy says, so far, the Bon Diva network has 1,500 members all over the country. Roche has conducted its seminars in Metro Manila, Southern Luzon, Cebu and Davao so far.



ONCE-MONTHLY Ibandronic acid or Bonviva

WWW.ROCHE.COM

"Ubos na?!"

Eh Kasi Gardenia! Walang Sayang.
Di Ka Manghihinayang. Sulit Talaga!

Dahil ang Gardenia, ibang-iba!
Kaya naman gustong-gusto
ito ng mga bata.
May sarap, lambot at bangong
nanunuot sa bawat kagat!
Siksik sa sustansya ang bawat slice.
At sigurado ka pang
laging freshly baked!

Ubos na ba
ang inyong Gardenia?
Bili pa!
Basta para sa pamilya,
kahit marami ang bilhin,
sulit pa rin!

DESIGNER WHEY
America's #1 Protein Shake
✓Builds Lean Muscle Mass
✓Burns Body Fat Faster
✓Strengthens Immune System
✓Develops Stronger Bones
✓Promotes Healthy Aging
DESIGNER WHEY.
Because you care for your health.
for more info pls visit www.designerwhey.com
Available at Watson's, SM, Robinson's, Shopwise, Superd, Sta Lucia, Rustan's and Fitness First
For inquires please call Precioze: 7232452 / 7277946

Re-shape your body, mind and spirit

"... Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being." —Henry David Thoreau

IMAGINE A LANDSCAPE. Call it you. It is made up of both inner and outer terrain. The inner and outer you.

Landscapes are meant to be exactly that—shaped, trimmed and fixed according to your idea of a perfect look, a perfect feel. There are ways to achieve this without going to the extreme, believing that change is possible and within reach.

Let us reverse the order of things and start with the spirit because this is where it all begins.

Spirit of things to come

Awakening one's listening heart is as easy as desiring it to happen. Inspiration comes to us when we actually open the heart.

The key word is "listen," making decisions that come from your inner guidance. Before you do anything, even ordinary things, ask yourself: "Is this what I really want? What is the right thing to do?"

Just the very act of turning to your "wise" self can give you the guidance you seek because it comes from a higher source. This guidance comes more naturally and frequently when you are in a relaxed state of mind.

Exercise 1

Guidance recall: Make this day a special decision day. Before you do anything, consider each decision you make, no matter how small, to be very important. Start with your food choices for breakfast, what clothes to wear, what route to take to work, which friend to call or see. They are simple everyday things and yet, once you practice, expect subtle change to happen.

Exercise 2

Spa heaven: Yes, this is the place you go to just as you begin to dream. The body is not the only part of you that needs recharging.

Just before bedtime, tell yourself that you are going to the spa in heaven. Give it your fantasy's best architectural description—temples and blue skies. Hold on to this picture. Then go to sleep. Next morning, recall your dream. Wake up feeling completely whole.

Mind over matter

And this has never been more true than today. The power of the mind cannot be underestimated or ignored. When embarking on any endeavor, you are either defeated or victorious depending on your mental outlook. Envisioning what you want to happen takes practice. But first, quiet the mind. Meditate by embracing your silence. Later, do a cutout of your mind-map.

Exercise 3—mind-map

Get any magazine and cut out the first words that attract you. Paste them in an album. Then read them in random order. What did your mind acknowledge? Is there a message for you?

Stress-free world

Is it possible? Maybe not but you can handle stress much better. Since you cannot run away from stressful situations, manage them with calm. Apart from a healthy regimen that includes well-balanced meals, exercise and relaxation, there is a new supplement that has been scientifically proven to control or, at the very least, relax the body in a natural way. It's called Cortitrol, a herbal preparation in a pill.

Natural ingredients like magnolia bark, Thea Pure and Epimedium keep cortisol, a stress hormone, from running amuck in our system. Made by Pharmanex, Cortitrol takes effect almost immediately. This new and novel product is now in the market.

Body bliss

Reshaping can be done naturally. Cleansing the body starts with great skin. Use natural products. Take in as much fresh and organic food as you can possibly take. A multi-awarded product contains ingredients that can clear up the skin within minutes. It's called Oil of Pericap or cashew nut.

Inventor Rolando dela Cruz has reaped many foreign awards for this amazing breakthrough that treats warts, moles and now even skin cancer. Through his invention; now men and women alike can say goodbye to the cautery machine. Call Amazing Touch Center at 9209872/3667894.

Offering the best of radio therapy, using three modulated frequencies, the Resonax machine of Dr. Maryjane Valdecanas (Zen Institute, The Fort) is one of the gentlest state-of-the-art reshaping tools today.

MJ, as she is fondly called, developed her own technique to reshape the face without surgery using light patches. Painless and effective, the technique has been known to remove double chins and puffy cheeks in just three sessions.

The procedure speeds up the metabolism, as well as the natural melting of unwanted fat. One can see results after just one session. Tels. 8562027/8562028

Your beauty regimen

Coco rub: Generously rub virgin coconut oil on your entire body. Leave on for 20 minutes. Rinse. This will make your skin look younger.

Your affirmation

"Today is the day good changes come."

... Whatever your landscape, enjoy it. If you don't like it, change it.

Love and light!

Reference: "How to Master Change in Your Life," by Mary Carroll Moore

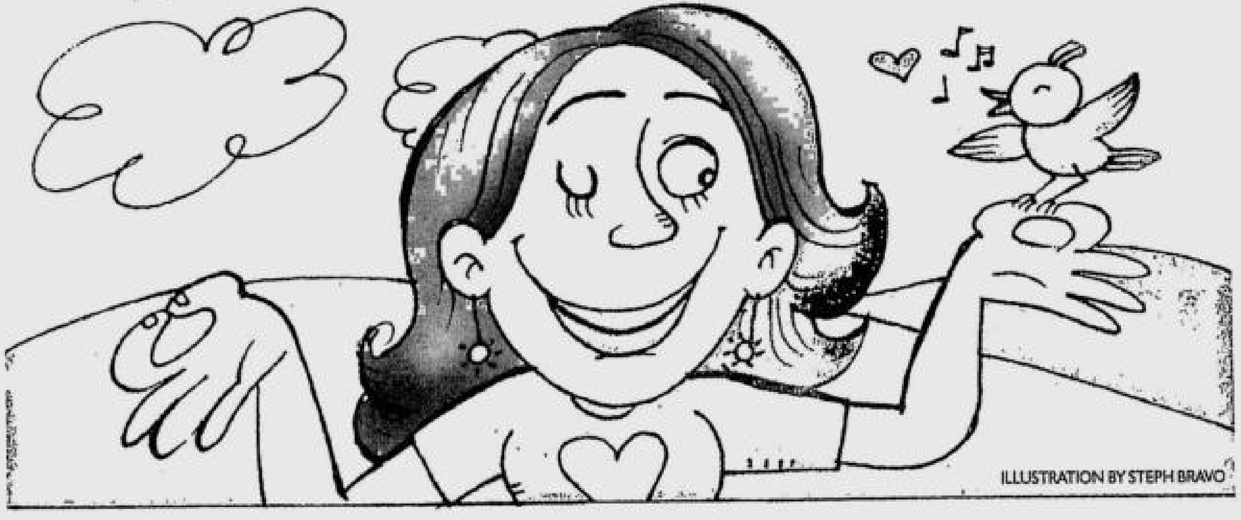


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Best GSM Mobile
WINNER
GSM ASSOCIATION
GLOBAL MOBILE AWARDS 07
SAMSUNG
WINNER
GSM ASSOCIATION
GLOBAL MOBILE AWARDS 07
SAMSUNG
Ultra edition 12.9

D900

imagine gorgeous colors, glorious lifestyles

Active, professional, or elegant? Express your lifestyle with the Ultra Edition 12.9, now available in different glorious colors. This gorgeous multi-tasker is the ultimate accessory in high living. Now, in high color. With the Ultra Edition 12.9, it's not that hard to imagine.

- 12.9mm world's slimmest slider
- 3 Megapixel camera with flash
- Stylish uPlus interface
- External memory slot (microSD)
- *Bluetooth*™ & PictBridge Printing
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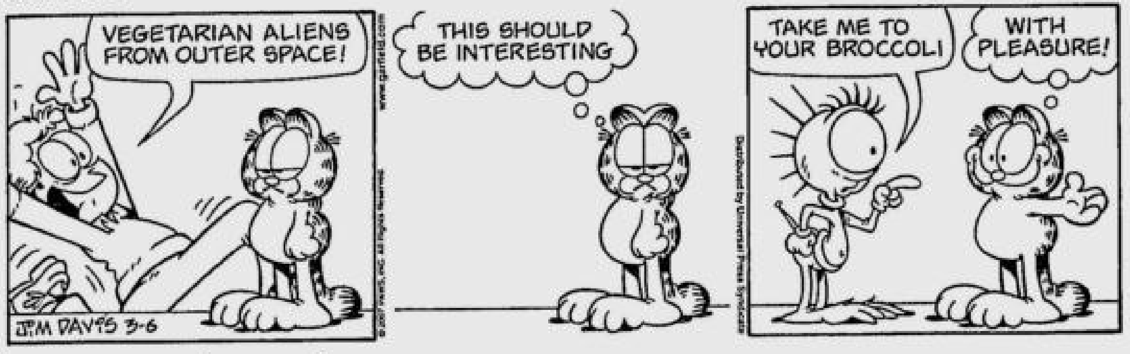
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2007

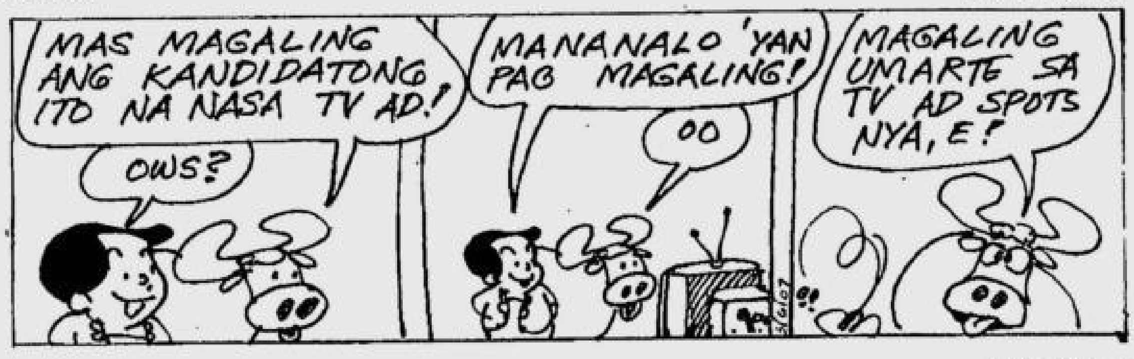
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


VEGETARIAN ALIENS FROM OUTER SPACE!
THIS SHOULD BE INTERESTING
TAKE ME TO YOUR BROCCOLI
WITH PLEASURE!
JIM DAVIS 3-6

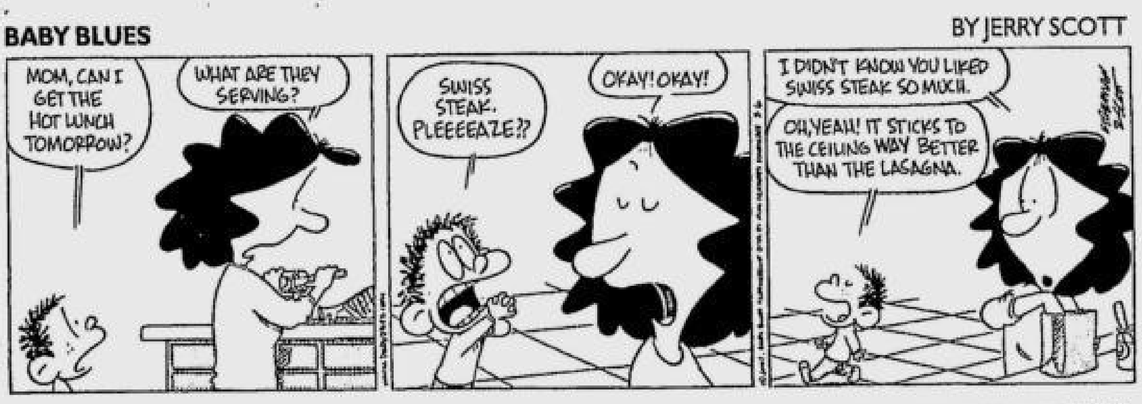
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MAS MAGALING ANG KANDIDATONG ITO NA NASA TV AD!
OWS?
MANANALO 'YAN PAG MAGALING!
OO
MAGALING UMARTE SA TV AD SPOTS NYA, E!

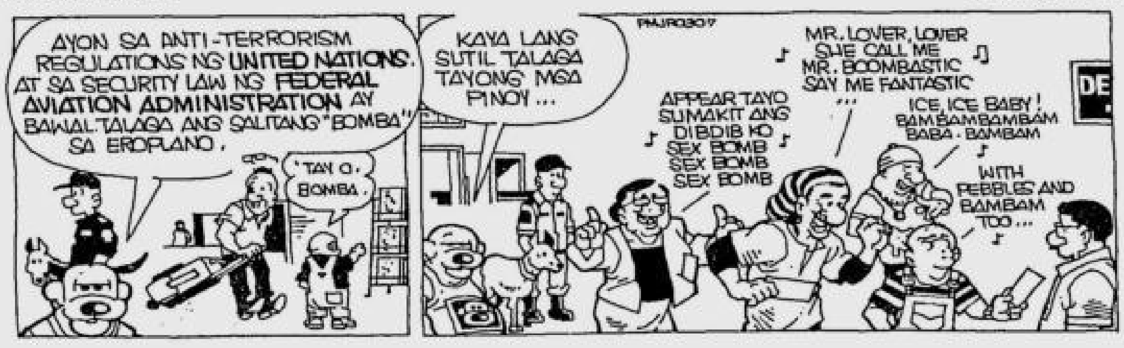
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM, CAN I GET THE HOT LUNCH TOMORROW?
WHAT ARE THEY SERVING?
SWISS STEAK. PLEEEEAZE??
OKAY! OKAY!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU LIKED SWISS STEAK SO MUCH.
OH, YEAH! IT STICKS TO THE CEILING WAY BETTER THAN THE LASAGNA.

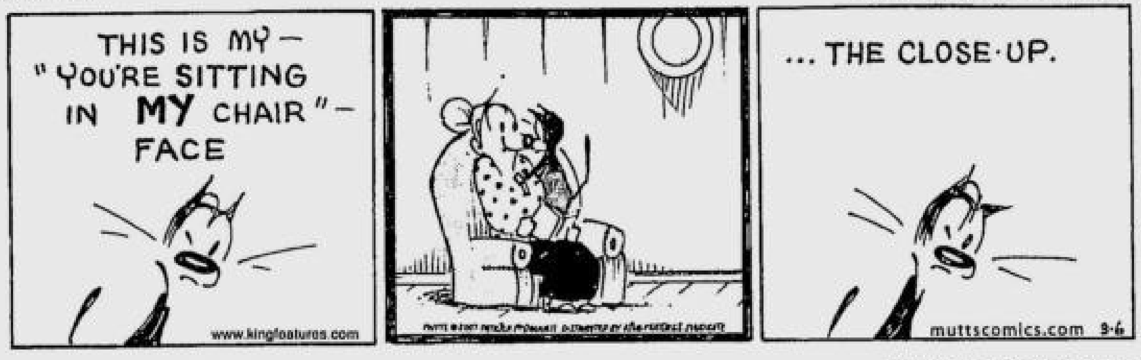
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


AYON SA ANTI-TERRORISM REGULATIONS NG UNITED NATIONS AT SA SECURITY LAW NG FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AY BAWAL TALAGA ANG SALITANG "BOMBA" SA EROPLANO.
'TAY O. BOMBA.
KAYA LANG SUTIL TALAGA TAYONG MGA PINOY...
PMJR0307
APPEAR TAYO SUMAKIT ANG DIBDIB KO SEX BOMB SEX BOMB SEX BOMB
MR. LOVER, LOVER SHE CALL ME MR. BOOMBASTIC SAY ME FANTASTIC ...
ICE, ICE BABY! BAMBAMBAMBAM BABA-BAMBAM
WITH PEBBLES AND BAMBAM TOO...

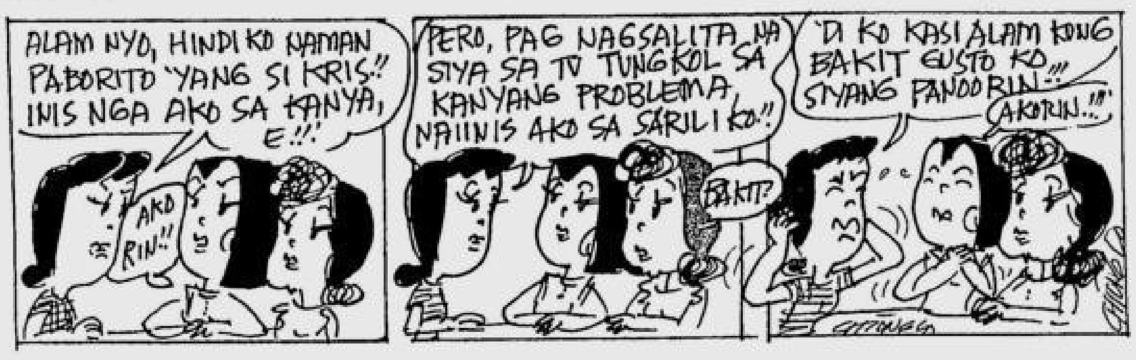
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THIS IS MY — "YOU'RE SITTING IN MY CHAIR" — FACE
www.kingfeatures.com
... THE CLOSE-UP.
muttscomics.com 3-6

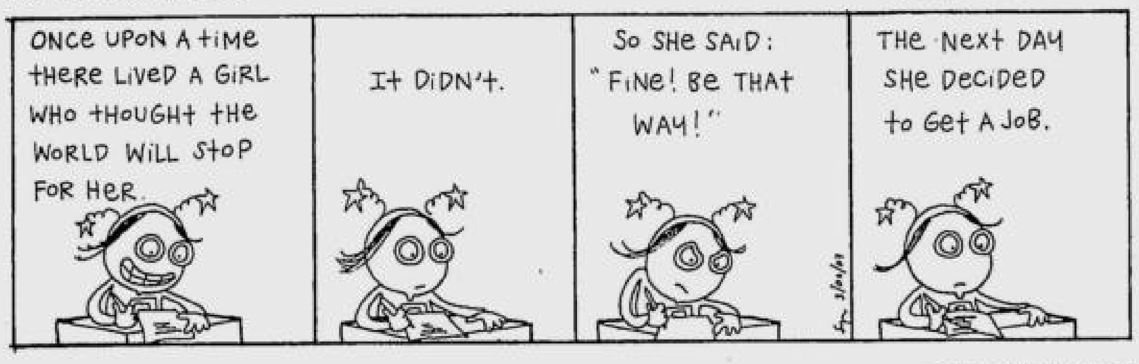
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM NYO, HINDI KO NAMAN PABORITO 'YANG SI KRIS!! INIS NGA AKO SA KANYA, E!!
AKO RIN!!
PERO, PAG NAGSALITA NA SIYA SA TV TUNGKOL SA KANYANG PROBLEMA, NAIINIS AKO SA SARILI KO!!
BAKIT?
'DI KO KASI ALAM KUNG BAKIT GUSTO KO SIYANG PANOORIN...!!
AKO RIN..!!

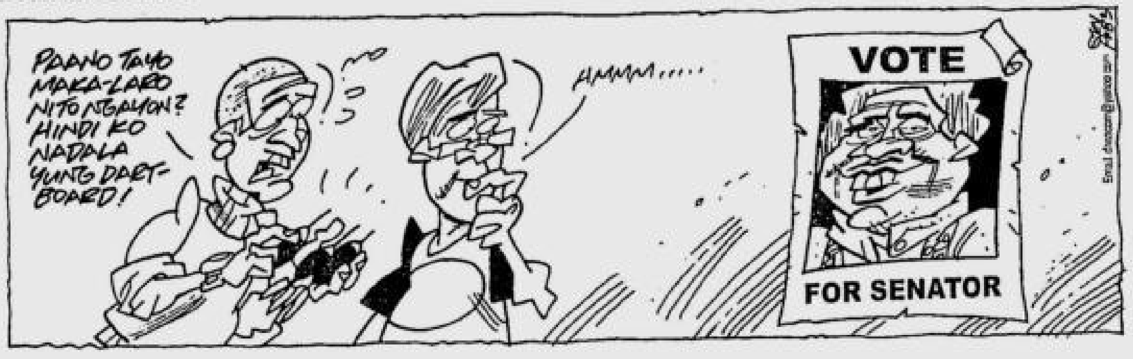
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ONCE UPON A TIME THERE LIVED A GIRL WHO THOUGHT THE WORLD WILL STOP FOR HER.
IT DIDN'T.
SO SHE SAID: "FINE! BE THAT WAY!"
THE NEXT DAY SHE DECIDED TO GET A JOB.

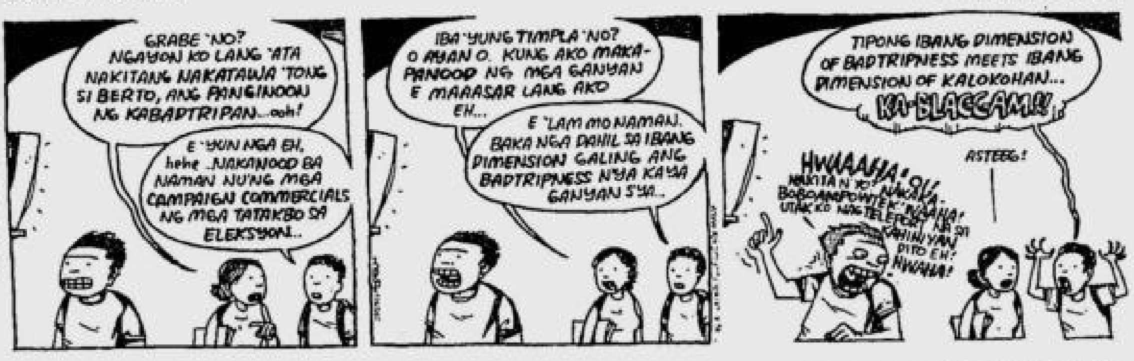
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PAANO TAYO MAKA-LARO NITO NGAYON? HINDI KO NADALA YUNG DART-BOARD!
HMMM.....
VOTE
FOR SENATOR

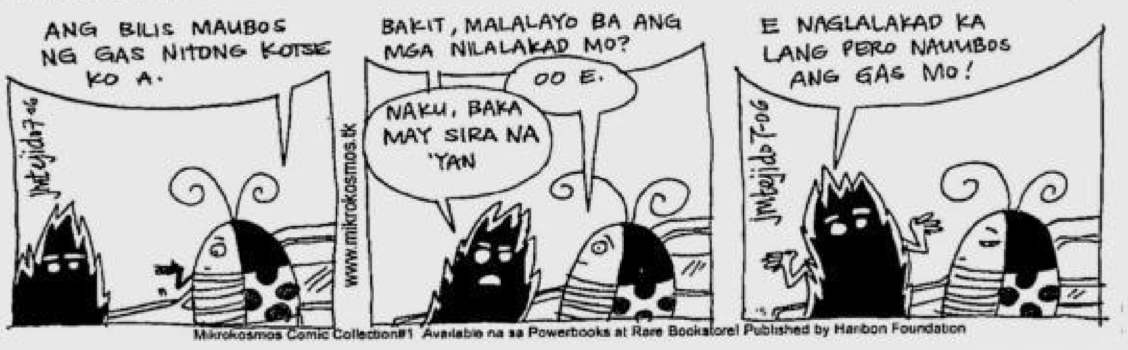
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE 'NO? NGAYON KO LANG 'ATA NAKITANG NAKATAWA 'TONG SI BERTO, ANG PANGINOON NG KABADTRIPAN...ooh!
E 'YUN NGA EH, hehe ..NAKANOOD BA NAMAN NUNG MGA CAMPAIGN COMMERCIALS NG MGA TATAKBO SA ELEKSYON..
IBA 'YUNG TIMPLA 'NO? O AYAN O. KUNG AKO MAKA-PANOOD NG MGA GANYAN E MAAASAR LANG AKO EH...
E 'LAM MO NAMAN. BAKA NGA DAHIL SA IBANG DIMENSION GALING ANG BADTRIPNESS NYA KAYA GANYAN S'YA...
TIPONG IBANG DIMENSION OF BADTRIPNESS MEETS IBANG DIMENSION OF KALOKOHAN... KA-BLACCAM!!
HWAAAHA!
ASTEEG!

MIKROKOSMOS

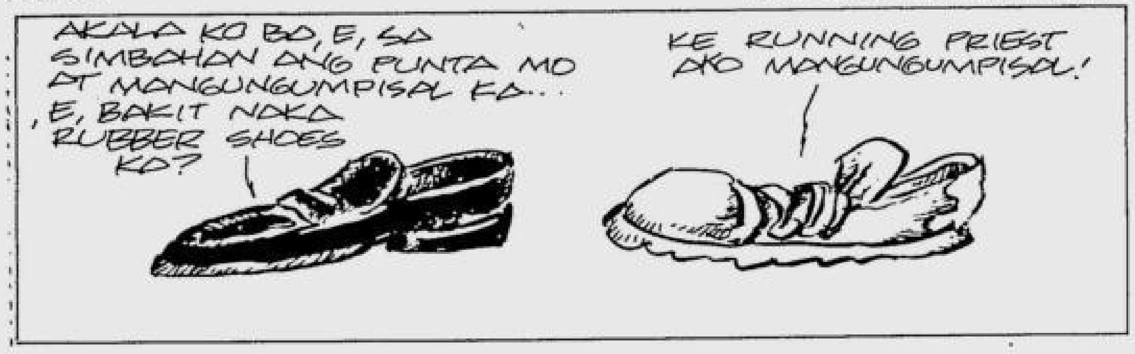
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG BILIS MAUBOS NG GAS NITONG KOTSE KO A.
BAKIT, MALALAYO BA ANG MGA NILALAKAD MO?
OO E.
NAKU, BAKA MAY SIRA NA 'YAN
www.mikrokosmos.tk
E NAGLALAKAD KA LANG PERO NAUUBOS ANG GAS MO!

Mikrokosmos Comic Collection#1 Available na sa Powerbooks at Rare Bookstore! Published by Haribon Foundation

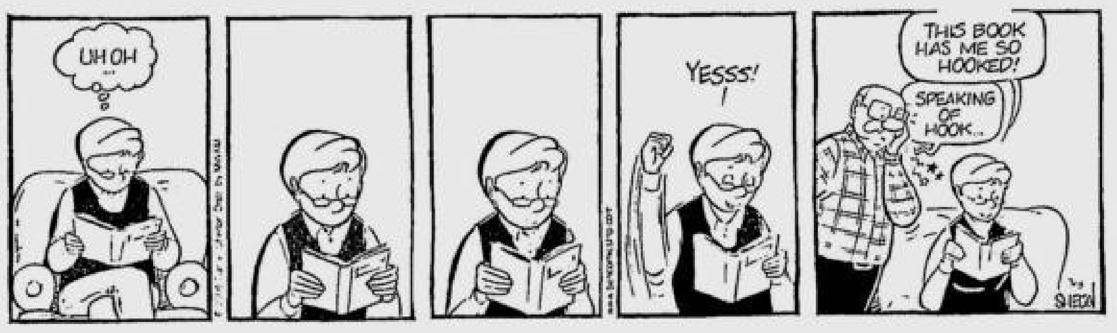
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


AKALA KO BA, E, SA SIMBAHAN ANG PUNTA MO AT MANGUNGUMPISAL KA... E, BAKIT NAKA RUBBER SHOES KA?
KE RUNNING PRIEST AKO MANGUNGUMPISAL!

BEN

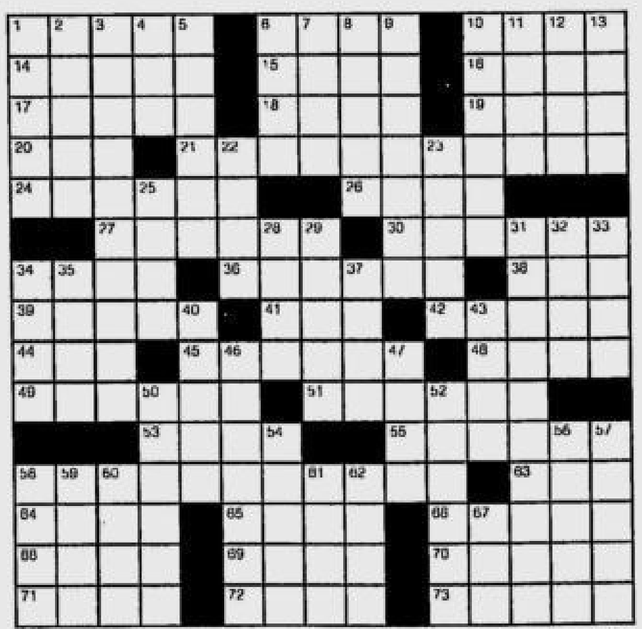
BY DANIEL SHELTON


UH OH ...
YESSS!
THIS BOOK HAS ME SO HOOKED!
SPEAKING OF HOOK...

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Staff sign
6 God of thunder
10 Park trees
14 Muse of poetry
15 Mrs. Charlie Chaplin
16 Roman baker's dozen?
17 Bring down
18 Coll. mil. grp.
19 Orange cover
20 __ Mahal
21 Direct-deposit destination
24 Put away
26 Substandard
27 Dangerous
30 Wall socket
34 Basil or sage
36 Fraternity initiation
38 __ had it!
39 Forearm bones
41 Clever humor
42 Underwear brand
44 Actress Vardalos
45 Browned
48 TV adjuncts
49 Irish port city
51 Actor Estevez
53 __ it the truth!
55 Lots and lots
58 Olympic occurrence, occasionally
63 Gun lobby letters
64 List add-on
65 Erelong
66 Soviet labor camp
68 Knucklehead
69 Former Steelers coach Chuck
70 Irregularly worn
71 Ooze
72 Heavy cart
73 "Like a Rock" singer

DOWN
1 Boston cagers
2 Zagreb native
3 Legal periodical
4 Nice hot time?
5 Malcolm's magazine
6 Ripped
7 Grabber
8 In reserve
9 Bushy-tailed critter
10 Send abroad
11 In __ of
12 Aspect
13 Sediment
22 Classic actress Menken
23 Word before up or drop
25 Distaff hoops grp.
28 Young deer
29 Online mag
31 Tinker Toy's relative
32 At any time
33 Hardy heroine
34 Suspended
35 Director Kazan
37 List unit
40 Sober
43 Really gung-ho
46 Author of "Atlas Shrugged"
47 Christian of fashion
50 Hit hard
52 Provides with quarters
54 Choir voice
56 Expunge
57 Lyricist Carol Bayer __
58 Spider creations
59 Earlier Nebraskan
60 Demolish
61 Soft drink
62 Part of ROM
67 Mary of "Where Eagles Dare"



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH

3/6/07

Monday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	U	E	■	R	E	P	E	L	■	A	K	I	N
E	A	S	Y	■	E	V	A	D	E	■	Z	E	R	O
T	H	E	E	G	G	A	N	D	I	■	A	V	I	D
H	A	S	S	L	I	N	G	■	■	B	L	I	S	S
■	■	■	H	A	M	S	■	P	R	E	E	N	■	■
A	B	R	A	D	E	■	V	I	O	L	A	B	L	E
D	I	O	D	E	■	K	A	P	U	T	■	A	U	F
I	D	L	E	■	F	I	L	E	T	■	D	C	C	L
E	E	L	■	F	E	T	I	D	■	L	E	O	R	A
U	N	W	I	L	L	E	D	■	C	O	R	N	E	T
■	■	■	I	D	O	L	S	■	R	E	A	R	■	■
T	U	T	E	E	■	■	C	O	R	D	I	A	L	S
A	G	H	A	■	S	E	A	B	I	S	C	U	I	T
S	L	I	T	■	O	T	T	O	S	■	K	N	E	E
S	I	T	E	■	T	A	S	T	E	■	S	T	U	N

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3/6/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very devoted to whatever you do. However, no matter what you do, you appreciate beauty in its many forms. You're drawn toward whatever pleases your senses. Because of this, you often idealize the object of your affections. In the year ahead, you will likely wrap up something you've been focused on for the past nine years. Time for something new!
Birthdate of: Shaquille O'Neal, basketball player; Michelangelo, artist; David Gilmour, musician/philanthropist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a good day to enter into agreements with others or sign contracts. It's also a good day to deal with the general public. You feel cooperative!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Things will go quite well at work today. Health matters can also improve. This is a good day to ask for resources, an increased budget or help from others in any way.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Try to make some time today to party and have fun with others. This is an excellent day to kick back, relax and enjoy yourself. After all, life is short (and fat).

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might be able to do something to expand your home or expand the activities in your home. People can gather today to learn something, study something or just celebrate together.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a busy, upbeat day. It's excellent for teaching, acting, selling, marketing and talking to others. It's also a good day to sign contracts.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Finances, moneymaking ideas, real estate and shopping are all favored today. Trust your financial hunches. Buy something for your home or a family member.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The Moon is in your sign today, making lovely connections with other planets—particularly lucky Jupiter! This makes you feel ready to greet the world with optimism and confidence.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Try to carve out a little time just for yourself today. You need some solitude to ponder things. Work behind the scenes or by yourself if you can.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Discussions with a friend will be upbeat and possibly practical as well, especially with regard to travel, publishing or the media. Discussions about education and schooling will go well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're in fine form today! And others notice this as well. Don't be surprised if someone approaches you for some serious advice.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): If you get an invitation to do something different today, accept it. You need a little adventure in your life. You want something new and different to happen.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Unexpected gifts and goodies might come your way today. Similarly, someone might give you good advice. Stay tuned, and remain positive!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

7			2	6				4
	3		5				9	
	1		3				8	
						3	4	1
3								7
4	5	1						
	4				7		6	
	2				8		1	
8				5	3			2

Difficulty Level ★★

3/06

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	7	8	6	4	2	3	9	1
2	6	1	9	8	3	7	4	5
4	3	9	5	1	7	2	8	6
8	9	2	3	5	4	1	6	7
3	1	4	7	6	9	8	5	2
7	5	6	8	2	1	9	3	4
9	4	7	2	3	6	5	1	8
6	2	5	1	9	8	4	7	3
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Difficulty Level ★

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

When signs are ignored

Part I

IN THE EVENING OF JAN. 26, I almost died! I did not know how serious my condition was until a few days later.

Like most, I ignored all warning signs and almost succumbed to a heart attack.

That evening I went to see a movie at Greenbelt Cinema in Makati, which was just a few minutes' walk from my office. Since I was already late, I walked faster than usual.

I was panting when I reached the theater and felt a strange pain and heaviness in my chest. Though the pain was not too severe, I knew it was different from previous ones.

After 10-15 minutes, the pain subsided but I had already called my wife who was shopping nearby. She came, but since the pain had subsided, I decided to finish the movie.

Afterward, as I drove home, I felt weak. I decided to see an old friend, a well-known 85-year-old cardiologist. He examined me, gave me some Eastern European herbal medicine and told me to go home and rest.

I went back to the office, did a little work then decided to go home. Since we have two cars, I drove one car and my wife the other.

Emergency

As I left the building, I felt bad again, weak and nauseous. I told my wife I wanted to go to the hospital and drove to the emergency room of the Makati Medical Center. My wife followed.

It took less than five minutes to reach the hospital, as I ignored all traffic rules and red signals.

An ECG was immediately done. It revealed an ischemia, inadequate blood supply to the heart that could have led to a fatal heart attack.

A blood examination revealed an elevated enzyme marker for heart attack. I was told the condition was serious but more tests were needed to determine how bad the situation was.

I refused the other tests because the doctors were not sure but they wanted me to stay in the hospital. I stubbornly refused thinking of a seminar I was conducting the next day that I could not cancel.

I signed a waiver freeing the hospital from responsibility and went home around 3 a.m. Despite very little sleep and a nearly fatal heart problem, I conducted the seminar and finished it with the help of an old student.

But I was exhausted. I told my students I might not be able to conduct the seminar the next day and I would refund half of their fees. They all agreed to just have the seminar postponed.

I was back at the MMC emergency room the next day. My new cardiologist, Dr. Dy Bun Yok, was contacted. He prescribed emergency medication and had me transferred to the Chinese General Hospital in Manila so he could attend to me.

I learned he was considered one of the best intervention cardiologists in the country. He supervised a team that did a successful multiple heart bypass operation on my older brother barely a month earlier.

I was transferred by ambulance to Chinese General that Sunday afternoon and brought to the Intensive Care Unit for heart patients, the Coronary Care Unit.

Unable to decide

I stayed there for four days because I could not decide whether or not to have an angiogram (X-ray examination of blood vessels) and possible angioplasty (surgical reconstruction of narrowed or obstructed arteries). I was afraid of surgery of any type.

Although I was assured the procedure was very safe and painless, I explored alternative methods.

But Doctor Dy, despite his long list of patients and a busy schedule, explained to me patiently there was no other way he could find out what artery was blocked and how serious the blockage was unless he did an angiogram.

If he found an artery that was severely blocked, he might have to do either an angioplasty or heart bypass.

I said a bypass was out of the question. I might allow the angioplasty, I said, but I asked for a couple of days more to decide. "It's your decision," he said, "I can only suggest."

Here is how an angiogram is done. Using only local anesthesia, a small incision or hole is made at the groin (femoral artery in the leg) through which a thin wire (catheter) is inserted and guided to the affected area. The doctor (and even patient) can watch the procedure on a screen. I preferred not to see it.

A dye is introduced into the body so the doctor can see clearly where the blockage is and how bad it is. Once the affected artery or arteries are identified, the doctor may do an angioplasty.

Doctor Dy found one of my arteries was 70 percent blocked.

In angioplasty, using the same incision made for angiogram, the doctor inserts and positions a balloon in the blocked artery, inflates it and leaves a stent (some kind of a splint) to keep the artery open. Then the wire or catheter is pulled out.

The two procedures lasted no more than 30 minutes. I did not even know it was over because I felt nothing at all.

The opening is then pressed by 6 pounds of sand bag and left taped for 24 hours to prevent bleeding. This is the most uncomfortable part of the procedure.

The angiogram and angioplasty are considered generally safe. But, still, the fear of being opened up kept me tense while the procedure was going on. After two days, I left the hospital.

Next week, I shall discuss the insights and lessons I learned during my illness.

The next Basic ESP & Intuition Development seminar will be held March 10-11, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Interested parties may call 8107245, 8926806; fax 8159890; or e-mail jtlicauco@tri-isys.com.

Your Doctor Knows Best

Anastacio R. Aquino, MD, FPCP, FPCC, FACC

Question:
I have been having chest pains lately. Am I at risk of having a heart attack?

Doctor says…

There are many causes of chest pain, but the most common is angina. Angina is chest pain that occurs when your heart muscle does not get enough blood, causing discomfort that feels like pressure or a squeezing pain in your chest. You may also sometimes feel pain in your shoulders, neck, jaw or back, and it may also feel like indigestion. Angina puts you at risk of having a heart attack in the future.

There are two types of angina: stable and unstable. Stable angina is the most common, and it occurs when the heart is working harder than usual. People with stable angina experience chest discomforts that are usually predictable. For example, it occurs during exertion (such as running to catch a bus), or when a person is under mental or emotional stress. This type of angina is normally relieved with rest or with a drug called nitroglycerin, or both.

The other type is called unstable angina, in which the chest pain is unexpected and usually occurs while at rest. The discomfort brought by unstable angina may be more severe and prolonged than atypical angina (the first time a person has angina). Unlike stable angina, it can occur without physical exertion and is not immediately relieved by rest or medicine. Unstable angina is a very dangerous condition that requires emergency treatment. It is a sign that a heart attack could occur soon.

Angina or chest pain is caused by not enough blood supply to your heart. Not enough blood flow results from the build-up of fats, cholesterol and other substances in the coronary arteries that carry blood to the heart, or what we call atherosclerosis. If one or more arteries are partly clogged, not enough blood can flow through the heart, resulting to a condition called coronary artery disease.

There are several risk factors for angina and atherosclerosis which include a family history of premature coronary artery disease, cigarette smoking, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia (high blood cholesterol), and hypertension (high blood pressure).

Aside from chest discomfort, people suffering from angina may experience symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, shortness of breath, sweating, lightheadedness, or weakness. In stable angina, episodes of pain usually lasts a short time (5 minutes or less). In unstable angina, pain may last longer (30 minutes) and may get continuously worse.

You can prevent or lower your risk for heart disease and angina by making lifestyle changes and getting treatment for related conditions like high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and overweight or obesity.

If you want to know more about angina and the treatment for it, consult your doctor.

***Dr. Aquino** is an Internist-Cardiologist. He is a Professor at the College of Medicine at Saint Louis University (SLU) in Baguio City, and Chair of the Department of Medicine, SLU Hospital of Sacred Heart.*

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

More on the bone robbers

Part two

KEEPING YOUR bones strong as you age is not as easy as popping calcium supplements and drinking milk. Potential "bone robbers" may be lurking.

Medications

Too much pre-formed Vitamin A increases the risk of fractures. The Harvard School of Public Health discourages supplements with 5,000 units of pre-formed Vitamin A unless prescribed by a doctor because many foods are already fortified.

Vitamin A is not the same as beta-carotene, which does not increase the risk of fractures.

Long-term use of corticosteroids can lower bone mass density. Other medications like anticonvulsants, thyroid medicines, certain diuretics and blood thinners can cause bone loss or deficiencies in calcium and/or Vitamin D.

Colas

A 2006 Tufts University study found that elderly women (average age a little below 60) who drank four 12-oz colas (regular or diet) a week for four years had 4 percent lower bone density than women who drank less than one cola a week. Men were not affected and neither were women who drank other types of soft drinks.

Women who drank cola registered low bone density regardless of age, menopause, calcium and Vitamin D intake, and smoking or drinking habits.

The researchers suspect either caffeine or phosphoric acid in colas might be to blame. Caffeine increases calcium loss through the urine while phosphoric acid can leach calcium from bones.

The body uses the mineral phosphorus, together with calcium, to make bones. Some studies show that high phosphorus intake is only harmful to bones if the diet is deficient in calcium.

Phosphorus is not just found in sodas. It is also in white flour products, processed meats, instant soups and some breakfast cereals.

Protein

Protein does not just build muscle. It is also an integral part of bones in the form of collagen. Research suggests that very low-protein and very high-protein diets can be harmful to bones.

But how much is too much? Is vegetable protein better than animal protein? Studies so far are conflicting.

Pro-meat

2003 Creighton University: Elderly women (65-77 years old) with the highest intake of protein (72 g per day and 408 mg of calcium) had higher bone density in the spine and total body but not the hip. A 1974 study of young men found similar results. A higher protein diet increased calcium absorption but only if calcium intake was above 500 mg a day.

1999 Utah State University: A lower risk of hip fracture among older women (50-69) was associated with a higher intake of animal protein compared to vegetable protein.

Anti-meat

2001 University of California, San Francisco: Elderly women who ate a meat-rich diet had lower bone density in the hip and greater risk of hip fractures than those who got their protein from vegetables.

1996 Harvard School of Public Health: Women who ate red meat five times a week had a higher risk of forearm fracture than women who ate red meat less than once a week.

Women who ate more than 95 g of protein per day also had a higher risk of forearm fracture than women who ate less than 68 g per day. The increase in risk was associated with animal protein but not with vegetable protein.

Vegan warning

1997 Kaohsiung College, Taiwan: Postmenopausal Buddhist nuns with a strict vegan diet (absolutely no animal products) for many years were found to have a higher risk of lumbar spine fractures. The diet may have been deficient in Vitamin B12, only found from animal sources.

A Tufts University study found that women with low levels of Vitamin B12 (less than 6 mcg) had less dense spines, while men had less dense hipbones. Nutritionists usually recommend B12 supplements for vegans.

Salt

A 2005 Purdue University study discovered that black and white young females absorbed and assimilated salt and calcium differently. This may be why blacks have a higher rate of hypertension but a lower rate of osteoporosis (brittle bones). The opposite is true for whites. But the study found that "too much salt reduces bone density in both races."

According to a 1995 Australian study on postmenopausal women, the higher the sodium intake, the greater the loss of bone density in the hips. Sodium is present in many processed foods even if they do not taste salty.

A review of other studies indicates that reducing salt intake and increasing potassium in the diet help reduce bone loss. Potassium is found in bananas, tomato and orange juice, melons, potatoes and spinach.

Depression

A study found that premenopausal women with major clinical depression had low bone density comparable to that of postmenopausal women. Another study found that women with past or current depression had lower bone density than women without depression. It is suggested that the stress hormone cortisol might be involved.

Milk

Anti-milk activists claim that a high intake of milk is a major cause of osteoporosis. This is a highly controversial issue. If proven true, it would be most ironic considering the aggressive promotion of milk for osteoporosis.

At the heart of the debate is the observation that countries with the highest dairy intake have the highest osteoporosis rates.

However, more research is needed. Too many factors affect bone health like Vitamin D, magnesium and physical lifestyle.

Sources: National Osteoporosis Foundation, National Institutes of Health—Osteoporosis & Related Bone Diseases Well-Connected Reports, Nidus Information Services

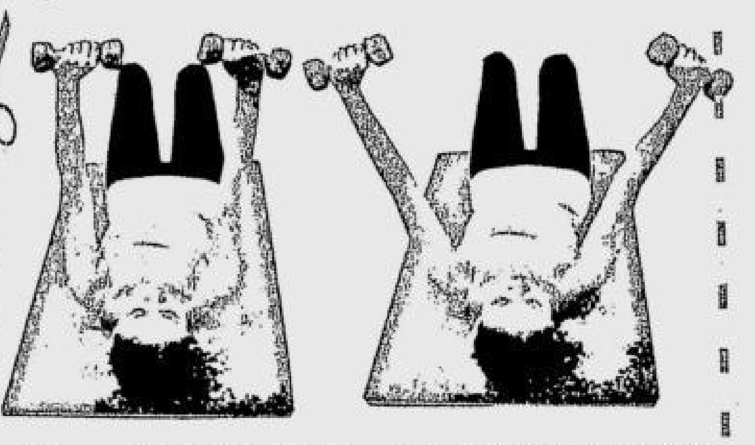
Note: "Pinay in Action" will hold a 5K and 10K fun run led by Senator Pia Cayetano on March 18 to celebrate Women's Month. Call 0927-4045187.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

CLIP & SAVE

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Letter-V arms



This exercise strengthens the chest.

Equipment:

Exercise mat and a pair of dumbbells

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent.
2. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, directly above your shoulder joint with the palms facing the knees.
3. Slowly lower your arms to about halfway between starting position and floor.
4. Slowly bring your arms back together.
5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. Maintain control of your chest muscles throughout the exercise. Avoid jerking or using momentum to raise or lower the weight.
2. As you lower your arms, maintain a slight tightness in the abdominal area to prevent your lower back from overarching.
3. Inhale as you lower arms; exhale on the return.

Repetitions:

Do 10-15 repetitions.

What kids can do this summer

THE football summer clinic sponsored by Milo can build up your child's love for sports and physical endurance.

SPORTS IS A GREAT WAY TO keep the kids fit and busy during the summer, at the same time allowing them time to hang out with friends and make new ones. But how to choose the right sports clinic out of the many out there claiming to have the expertise the experience and the staff to teach the fundamentals of any given sport?

The Summer Sports Clinics sponsored by Milo enjoys a reputation for teaching kids the basics of a particular sport in a unique as well as scientific manner.

"Milo is pleased to offer the 2007 Summer Sports Clinics as a platform for kids who want to get into sports, while at the same time, learn every facet of a sport in a right way," says Nestlé AVP and consumer marketing manager for Milo, Michelle Calo-Alvarillo. "The last 25 years have been fulfilling for us as the summer sports clinics sponsored by Milo are instrumental in inspiring kids to get into sports and enjoy its many health-giving benefits."

The 2007 clinics from March until May will feature courses on badminton, basketball, bowling, chess, football, gymnastics, ice skating, karatedo, lawn tennis, muay, swimming, taekwondo, and volleyball. With trained and experienced professionals supervising each course, your child will certainly reap the benefits of sports in a most enjoyable and effective way.

Over the years, the Milo-sponsored summer sports clinics have enjoyed a reputation as an excellent platform that builds and breeds champions. Among the champions the Milo summer sports clinics have produced are Paola Obañana in badminton, Paolo Mendoza, Patrick Fran and Larry Fonacier in basketball, Olympian Bea Lucero and SEA Games gold medalists Tammy de Guzman and Roel Ramirez, Mark Paragua in chess, Johnny Arcilla in tennis and Japoy Lizardo in taekwondo.

Call the Milo hotline at 914-7111 for more details.

Soccer series kicks off

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ALWAYS wanted to take up soccer but never had the chance nor the courage to try, there is a mall-based interactive indoor soccer series going on right now.

"Soccer Mania," which has been going around SM Supermalls all over the country, returns to Manila on March 9-11 at SM North Edsa, The Block, after which time it will be at SM Mall of Asia on March 23-25.

Rod Nepomuceno, managing director of Crush Communications, stressed that "Soccer Mania" is not a soccer tournament.

"This is not a league," he said. "People, especially the young, can try out soccer-related exercises, games, and challenges. They can watch how the game is played through game demos and clinics. And we will conduct this in a place where they usually hang out—SM Malls. We will have interactive games and a lot of cool, cool prizes."

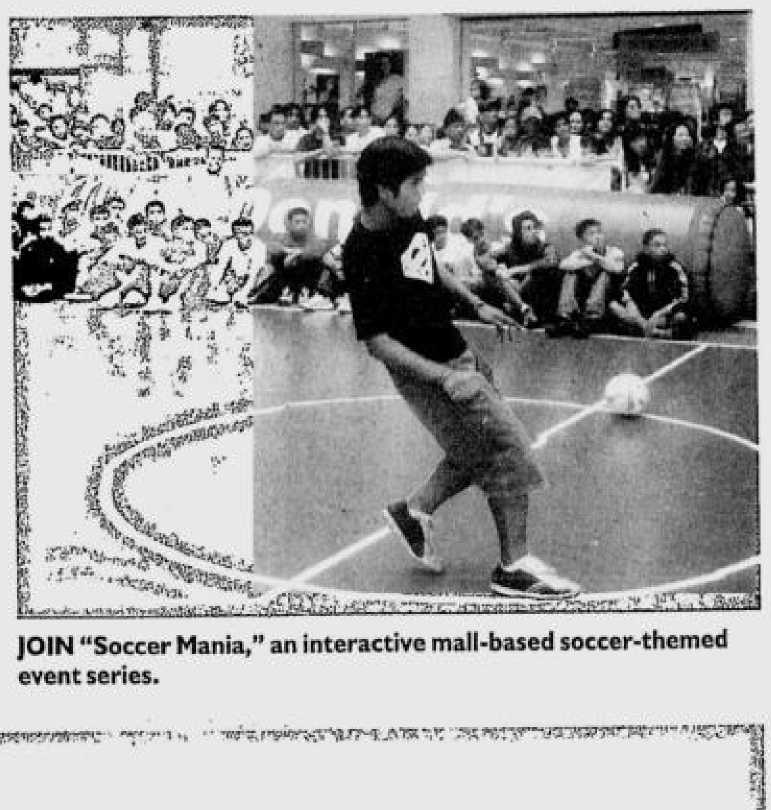
McDonald's, the biggest quick service restaurant in the world, and SM Supermalls, the biggest mall chain in the Philippines, have joined forces with Crush Communications to encourage more Filipinos to take up soccer.

"The event is consistent with McDonald's thrust worldwide as we are a major sponsor for both the Olympics and the World Cup," said McDonald's VP for Marketing, Margot Torres. "McDonald's believes in the promotion of a balanced, healthy active lifestyle, especially among kids."

Roberto R. Decena, AVP of SM Supermalls, said SM Supermalls with its 28 malls nationwide is in a prime position to introduce and promote new sports to Filipinos.

"We believe that soccer is a beautiful game that we can excel in internationally," he added. "In the same way that we have supported ice skating and produced international champions, we hope that by throwing our all-out support to Soccer Mania, we can produce future Filipino soccer champions."

Call 893-1434 or e-mail rod@crush.com.ph



JOIN "Soccer Mania," an interactive mall-based soccer-themed event series.

'Fast' tennis racquet debuts

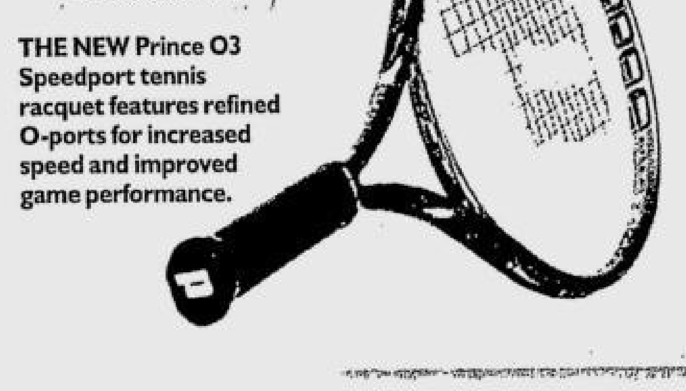
A TENNIS RACQUET FOR PLAYers who want more speed in their game is the newest product from Prince.

The new O3 Speedport features the newest innovation to its design—the revolutionary O-ports, oversized string holes that improve on the aerodynamics of racquets.

By refining the size, location and shape of the O-ports, racquet speed and performance are increased dramatically. It allows players to get their racquets into position, make better ball contact and hit clean and more precise shots.

Racquet speed determines the pace and spin of the ball and allows a player to hit a wider selection of shots. The extra speed can also help compensate for late setup, add power and spin to a good set up or add versatility around the court when selecting what shot to hit.

The new O3 Speedport is now available in leading sport stores nationwide. Call 6719765 or 6716660, or log on to www.princetennis.com.



THE NEW Prince O3 Speedport tennis racquet features refined O-ports for increased speed and improved game performance.

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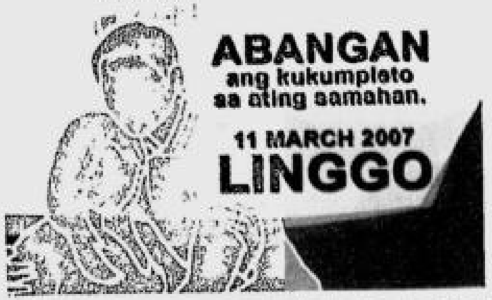

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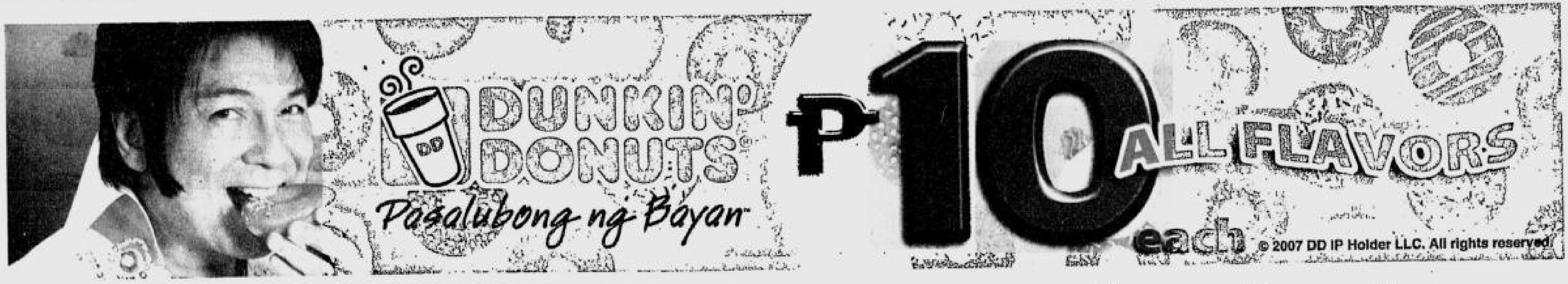

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'The Best Damn Thing' about Avril

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—THE petite blonde with hot pink streaks on her hair entered the room clad in a black top and tight pants with black-and-white stripes. She plopped into the couch, tucked her legs in, and smiled. (She is 21, but she can easily pass off as a teen barely out of high school.)

She talked softly, almost whispering, unusual for someone who tackles very demanding rock songs with aplomb.

Avril Lavigne punctuated the conversation with her favorite exclamations—"Totally!" "Absolutely!" "That's cool!"—and with finger pointing up in the air.

We were in a Beverly Hills hotel and she looked very comfortable. She stayed in the couch, occasionally putting her leg up on the coffee table.

"I am no longer in a dark place," she confessed, pulling her long blonde hair away from her face. Black eye liner and nail polish were her only concessions to her rock chick image at the moment.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

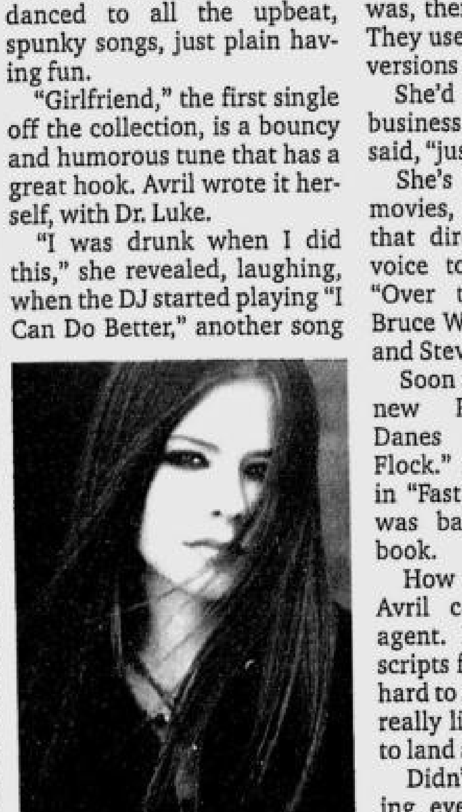
"When I was 17, I was breaking up with somebody," she said. "I was a teenager trying to find myself. So my songs were dark. Now, at 21, I am in love. I got married. I have definitely mellowed down. So my new songs reflect that." Avril just released her new album, "The Best Damn Thing," after a three-year break.

Listening party

We had gone to the listening party of this new album at LA's hottest new club, Hyde Lounge on Sunset Boulevard, prior to the interview. We had watched as she sang and danced to all the upbeat, spunky songs, just plain having fun.

"Girlfriend," the first single off the collection, is a bouncy and humorous tune that has a great hook. Avril wrote it herself, with Dr. Luke.

"I was drunk when I did this," she revealed, laughing, when the DJ started playing "I Can Do Better," another song she had collaborated on with Dr. Luke.



AVRIL Lavigne: "I'm more mature and mellow now."

When the title track, "The Best Damn Thing," an Avril-Butch Walker composition, blared, she clapped, danced, jumped up and down.

Avril got hitched last year to Sum 41 frontman Deryck Whibley, 26. She's "happily married," she said.

"A lot of people ask if my marriage has affected my singing. Not really. I am just in a happier place. I am older, I have mellowed down. Being a teenager is so hard. You're figuring out who you are, your body is changing. Now, I am more relaxed and confident."

Less swearing

Deryck was involved in the production of the new album. "We had fun," Avril said.

She was lucky, she said, "because I had 100 percent artistic freedom on this album. I picked my own musicians. I just [turned in] the songs when I was done. The company couldn't change anything. The only compromise I made was, there was less swearing. They used to have to do clean versions of my songs."

She'd like to stay in the business for a long time, Avril said, "just like Madonna."

She's also trying the movies, taking little steps in that direction. She lent her voice to the animated film "Over the Hedge," as did Bruce Willis, Garry Shandling and Steve Carrell.

Soon she will be seen in the new Richard Gere-Claire Danes crime drama, "The Flock." Earlier, she appeared in "Fast Food Nation," which was based on her favorite book.

How did she get a foot? Avril confessed, "I got an agent. I have been reading scripts for two years now. It is hard to find something that I'd really like to do. My dream is to land a dramatic one."

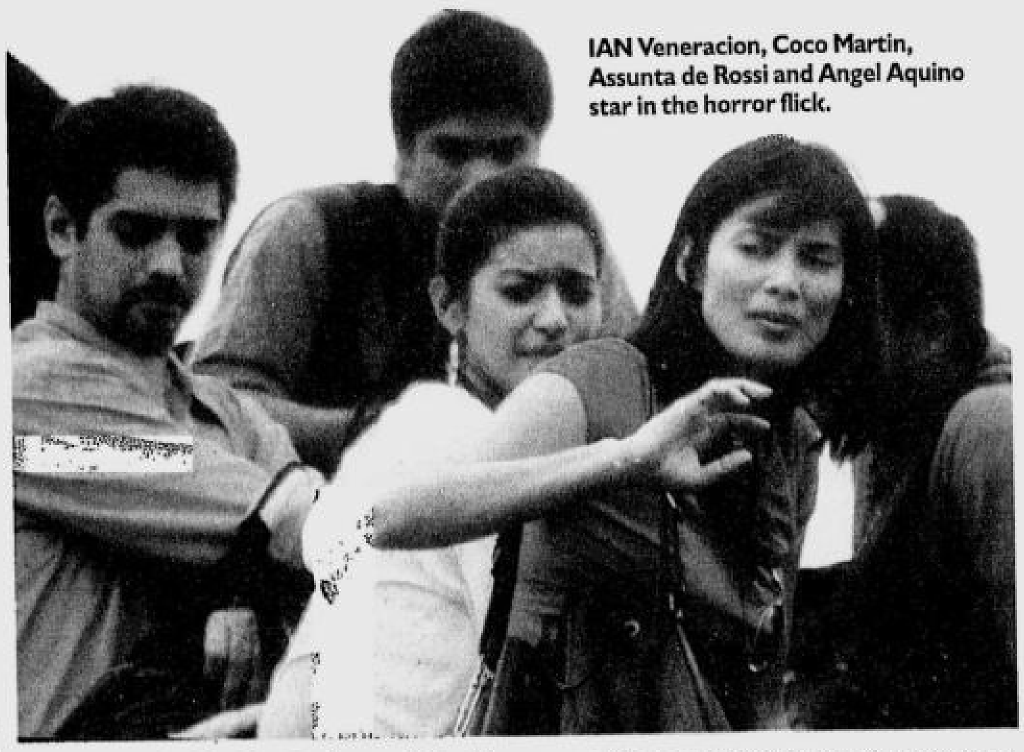
Didn't she feel she was doing everything too fast? we asked.

"Not really," she said. "I'm just living my dream."

'Siquijor' rocks the boat

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TOUTED AS A LOCAL VERsion of the sleeper hit "The Blair Witch Project," debuting director Philipp Espina's digital movie "Siquijor, Mystic Island" has incurred the ire of local politicians, according to producer Dante Mendoza of CenterStage.



IAN Veneracion, Coco Martin, Assunta de Rossi and Angel Aquino star in the horror flick.

In the horror flick, members of a TV crew from Manila (played by Angel Aquino, Ian Veneracion, Assunta de Rossi, Yul Servo, Coco Martin and Sid Lucero) get caught in a web of mysteries on the "island of witches."

Mendoza told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview that he had written Siquijor Gov. Orlando Fua Sr., "apologizing to him and his constituents" on Oct. 12 last year.

"After I sent them the film's trailer and copy of the script, I was told that a member of the provincial board had found the movie offensive, that it might tarnish the reputation of their province and drive away tourists," the producer explained.

Mediation sought

Mendoza, who directed acclaimed films like "Masahista," "Kaleldo" and "Manoro," said that he discussed the issue with Vice Gov. Carl Ganhinhin.

"I asked him to mediate with the board. After four months, I haven't received a response," Mendoza related. "We have decided to push through with the film's publicity campaign. Even if they now object to our use of the province's name in the title, we can no longer change our posters and trailers."

Mendoza has received word that a complaint against the film has been lodged with the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB).

This was denied by MTRCB chair Ma. Consoliza Laguardia.

"We don't have the power to stop the showing of films. Our job is only to review and classify according to age group. We are scheduled to review the film this week," Laguardia told INQUIRER Entertainment.

Mendoza said his worry was that the film might be unceremoniously slapped with a Temporary Restraining Order. "As far as I know, no one has filed a case against the film yet," he said.

The film's original playdate was June last year. The delay, however, helped Jerrold Tarrog polish the sound effects and music score, the producer noted. The digital movie was blown up to 35mm film for its commercial run, scheduled on March 14.

Mendoza doesn't think the movie disparages the province.

"We didn't show the provincial hall or other landmarks. We just showed the sea and forest. It could've been anywhere," he said.

In discussions with Vice Gov. Ganhinhin, the producer said he pointed out that another Visayan island, Capiz, used its own "supernatural" reputation to advantage by staging the Aswang Festival. Mendoza said this helped Capiz earn much-needed revenues. "Perhaps, Siquijor could do the same," he suggested.

GERMAN MORENO

Be total entertainers, Germs tells young ones

By Nini Valera

IN A TWO-HOUR VALUES FORMATION workshop, German Moreno lectured "Starstruck" season 4 survivors on the virtue of professionalism, punctuality, respect, cooperation, relationships, patience and humility.

The veteran television host told INQUIRER Entertainment that the workshop he was asked to conduct by GMA 7 president Felipe Gozon last week was very similar to the on-air workshops he used to hold in the defunct youth-oriented show "That's Entertainment."

Speaking mostly in Filipino, Moreno observed that "kids today who want to be in show business do not have the same attitude as veteran performers."

"They're luckier in the sense that workshops like this one are being conducted for them," he said. "Before, if you had talent, you had to audition to get the job."

Moreno, who started as a janitor at the Clover Theater in 1957, became curtain raiser, projectionist and assistant theater manager before he was given a break to appear as Jesus Christ in a passion play staged in Clover.

"Stars then were not limited to singing and dancing," Moreno said. "That's what I told the kids. For example, a singer, like Berlin Meneses ('Tawag ng Tanghalan' champion in the 1950s), broke the record with the most number of encores at the Clover. He had 30 encores aside from his regular repertoire. Imagine the number of songs he could sing."

Moreno cited survivor Jesi Corcuera, a self-confessed lesbian, as an example of how an actress could limit herself.

Misconception

"I told her she had one of the loveliest faces in the group, and yet she wanted to perform only tomboy or male roles," Moreno related. "I told her she couldn't play the same character over and over. She should learn to be a leading lady, even a *contravida*."

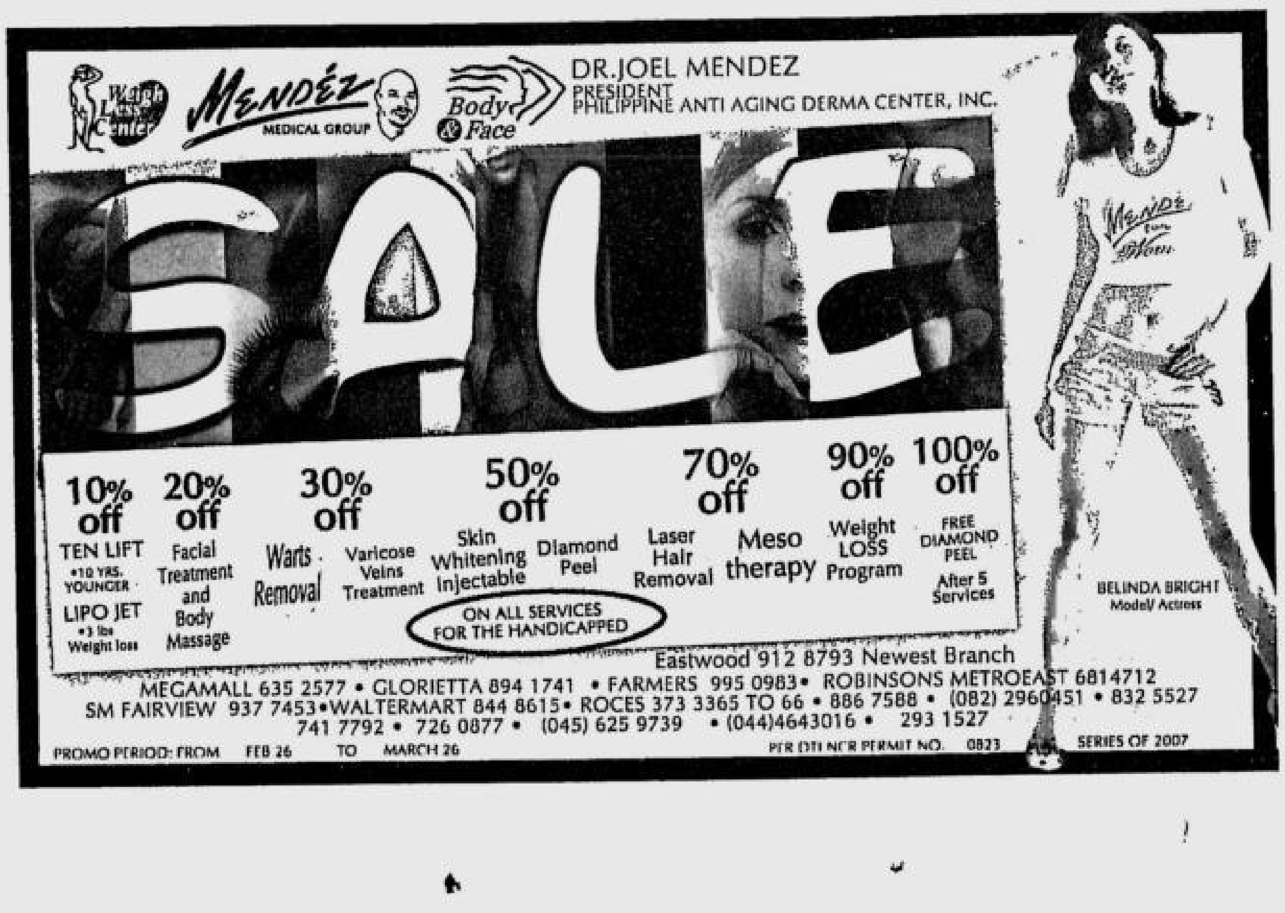
A misconception among the survivors about "Starstruck" is that the reality search is merely a singing contest, Moreno said. "It's about being a total entertainer," he stressed.

BE TOTAL/ E4

CHEER FACTOR

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—Actor Rupert Everett led more than 7,500 revelers through the streets of Sydney on Saturday for the 29th annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

One float featured 250 men dressed as pop singer Kylie Minogue; another— titled the Unkultured Klub of Karma Kleaners —honored the former Culture Club band lead singer, Boy George. *AP*



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JIM CARREY in "The Number 23"

A brooding, disconcerted Jim Carrey

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

JIM CARREY stars in "The Number 23," a number-obsessed psychological thriller that occasionally gets pretentious. Wearing a considerably darker guise is a huge departure from the actor's long list of comedic roles.

This Jim Carrey that audiences haven't seen before is a brooding, disconcerted character in the Joel Schumacher-directed murder mystery. Well, those are some unexpected contradictions off the bat—a noir-ish Schumacher and a dead-serious Carrey. It's a strange, stunt-like combination that does get people curious.

REVIEW

No toothy grin

"The Number 23" is primarily a chance for Carrey to do something different, and show his versatility. He can tone it down, anyway, as he proved in "The Truman Show" and a few subsequent films.

But he's played similar face-contorting clowns in many of his movies since the '90s, so it's good that he's willing to try something else. He can pull off the beleaguered semi-regular joke without flashing his toothy grin or resorting to making himself look like a fool, and he does that quite impressively here.

> It gets preposterous when it singles out the number a la 'The Omen,' or even 'Seven,' but doesn't conjure up the same frightening effect of either movie.

But the film isn't exactly a breath of fresh air. Here, Carrey portrays dog catcher Walter Sparrow, who discovers that a novel bought at a second-hand bookstore, "The Number 23," recounts details similar to those of his childhood. Bizarre coincidences in his life suddenly, and ominously, point to the number 23, as the book mentions its significance in tragic and unfortunate incidents throughout history.

Actual connections

Mathematical equations abound and foretell tragedy in Walter's own life, so he has to convince his wife Agatha (Virginia Madsen) and their son (Logan Lerman) that there's an actual connection between the book and real events.

The film gets preposterous when it singles out the number a la "The Omen," or even "Seven," but it doesn't conjure up the same frightening effect of either movie. It may lead one to conclude that there's a supernatural angle that will be examined—there have been some unsettling cases of synchronicity—and that's a ploy that works. But again, the non-stop mention of the number makes it feel contrived and overly milked.

"The Number 23" has similarities to certain aspects of older films "Identity" and "Frailty," so the big revelation regarding the truth behind the book may not feel as important to those who've seen those other films. It does come as a bit of a surprise, thanks in no small part to Carrey, who also plays the mystery book's protagonist, a detective named "Fingerling."

Contradicting worlds

Two worlds, therefore, are contrasted. This allows Schumacher to play with pacing and a murkier palette, as Walter's reality slowly starts to resemble Fingerling's. While not at all a visionary filmmaker, the director shows here that he can competently keep things connected and, yes, a little suspenseful.

But the dialogue and resolution feel a tad awkward, making much of the big story moments feel inconsequential. Carrey shows, however, that just like fellow hyperactive funnyman Robin Williams, he can act against type and still be credible. Hopefully, he'll get better material to work with next time, because "The Number 23" singled out a narrative device that's far from gripping, and ultimately, the confounding math problems don't really count.

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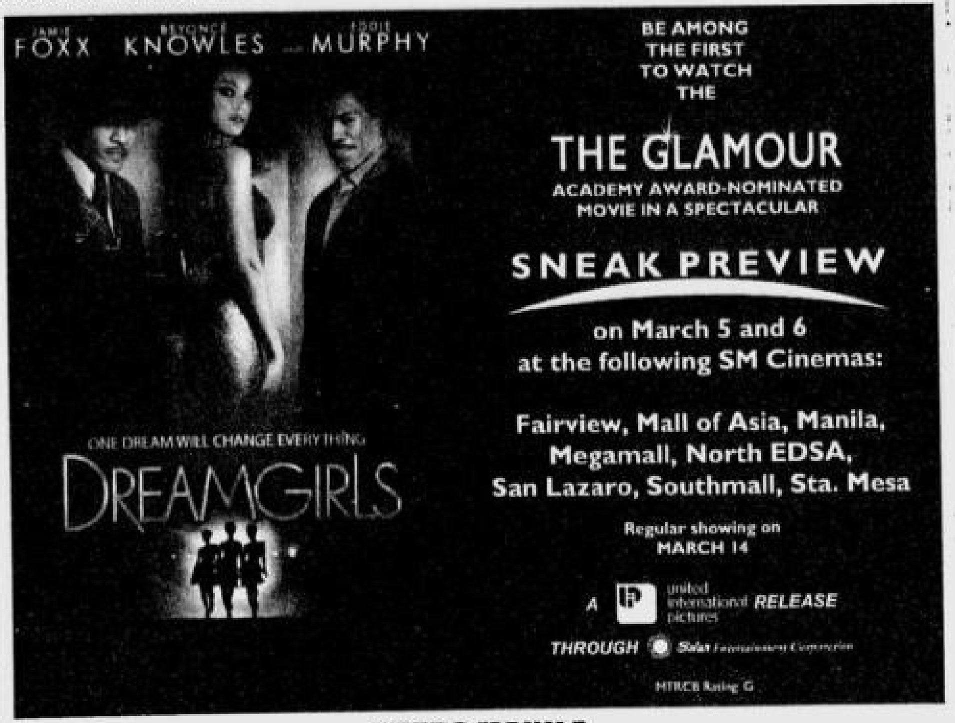

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3 DREAMGIRLS
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING/ FLUSHED AWAY
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 CATCH AND RELEASE
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
GHOST RIDER
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
MUSIC AND LYRICS
CINEMA 2
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2 DREAMGIRLS
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 GHOST RIDER
8 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
9 FLUSHED AWAY
10 NUMBER 23
11 YOU GOT ME
12 YOU GOT ME

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 GHOST RIDER
4 DREAMGIRLS
5 THE PROMISE
6 YOU GOT ME
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 FLUSHED AWAY
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 YOU GOT ME
11 NUMBER 23
12 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
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4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 YOU GOT ME
9 DREAMGIRLS
10 EPIC MOVIE
11 NUMBER 23
12 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 PRIMEVAL
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 THE PROMISE
9 NUMBER 23
10 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 PRIMEVAL
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA/ FLUSHED AWAY
4 GHOST RIDER
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME

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1 DREAMGIRLS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
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4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 NUMBER 23
8 PRIMEVAL
9 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 DREAMGIRLS
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 GHOST RIDER
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 THE PROMISE

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 NUMBER 23
4 YOU GOT ME

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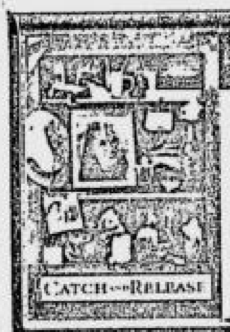
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER



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2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 GHOST RIDER
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1 YOU GOT ME
2 FLUSHED AWAY
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4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 YOU GOT ME
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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2 FLUSHED AWAY
1:30, 3:40, 5:50
G
DREAM GIRLS
8:20, 11:10
G

3 YOU GOT ME
2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00
G

4 PRIMEVAL
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
R-13

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DREAMGIRLS
MTRCB PG-13 7.00, 10.00
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
MTRCB PG-13
2:30 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
3 YOU GOT ME
MTRCB GP
2 30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
MTRCB PG-13
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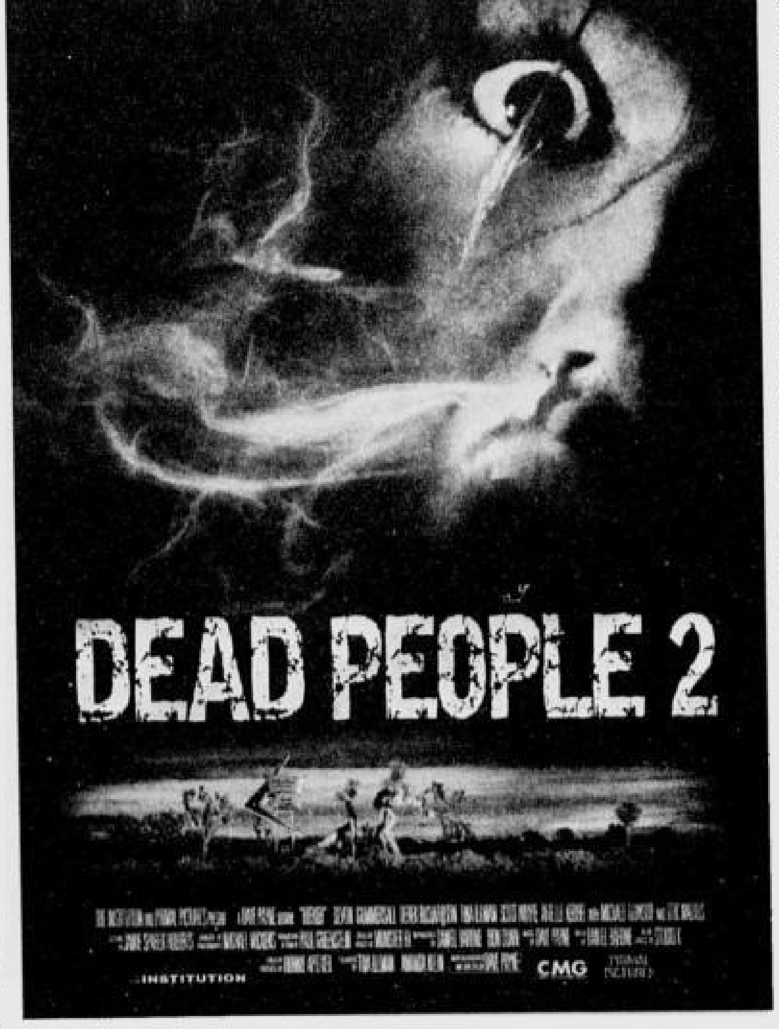

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More newscast no-no's

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Viewers notice, too, and here's their list

AFTER OUR RECENT PIECE ON NEWScasts and news anchors came out, we received some follow-up notes from readers. One complained about the level of visual and verbal violence in some TV newscasts.

Another pointed out that radio news programs deal their own low blows, not the least of which are their blurring of the line separating news from commentary, and their frequent use of the old-fashioned, print-oriented word "*naturang*."

A viewer grumbled that late-night newscasts were telecast so very late that they should be called "midnight" or even "early-early" news shows!

Taking a more positive tack, another viewer cited newscasters who are doing good, professional work, focusing on the news and presenting it intelligently: Pia Hontiveros, Julius Babao, Ces Drilon and David Celdran.

For our part, we were flummoxed recently when we caught a newscaster starting to talk about the USA (as in United States of America), only to rapidly and nervously change her tack when she belatedly realized the news spiel was in Tagalog, and that the item referred to an "*usa*," as in deer, that was trapped in an icy pond!

It's human to make mistakes, but we found this error instructive because it revealed that the newscaster probably didn't bother to review and rehearse her news spiels.

This bolsters the view that some newscasters don't give their work the time and attention it deserves—and that's all to the bad.

Another surprising and embarrassing moment took place just last week, when a reporter dressed in black was shown making a report from the field. There appeared to be something wrong with the outfit, and we soon realized that her black top was so thin and stretched so tight that parts of the white of her bra were showing through.

The visuals cut away to some footage, and when the newscast went back to the reporter, part of her top had already been covered by some sort of sweater—but a little of the white still showed through.

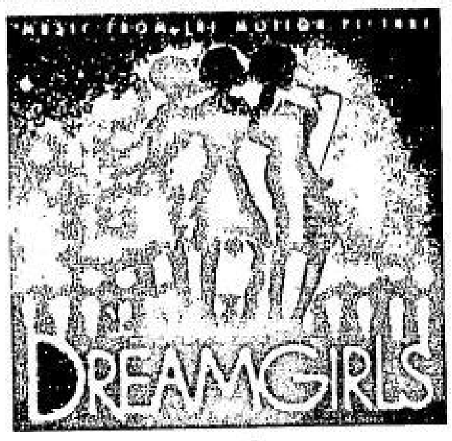
Dear TV news people, do give your work the care, concern for details and seriousness of purpose it deserves. No more trivializing distractions, please. And wear thicker and less tightly-fitting clothes on-cam, especially if you're on the plump side.

Finally, anchor-interviewers should please stop saying "before I let you go" to their interview subjects. Also, "can you hold while we ask so-and-so for *his* reaction?" and "We've run out of time but maybe we can invite you back?" It all sounds too manipulative and controlling—especially when the interviewee is a VIP, who shouldn't have to put up with such insensitive and overly pushy treatment.

DID YOU KNOW...

LONDON—THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORP. BEGAN SHOWING excerpts from its news and entertainment programs on the YouTube video-sharing website Friday, after becoming the first international broadcaster to ink a major deal with the Google Inc.-owned portal. *AP*

SPIN CITY

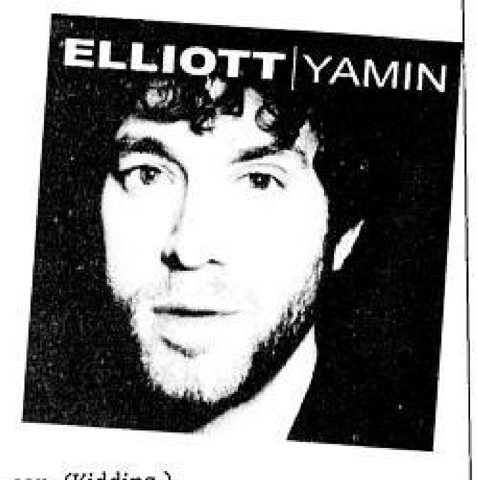


Must-have soundtrack

WE WAIT IMPATIENTLY FOR "Dreamgirls" the movie. Meanwhile, we've got the "Music from the Motion Picture—Dreamgirls" the CD.

Without the benefit of moving images, we are treated to Jennifer Hudson's powerpacked performance. Take for instance the show-stopping "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going," where the girl goes from pleading to threatening and back, from defiance to desperation and through a couple dozen emotions in between.

There's this ongoing global tilt—guess which single note in the song won the SAG, Globe and Oscar awards for Hudson. (Kidding.)



Of course the soundtrack also includes the three Oscar-nominated original songs—"Love You I Do" (also performed by Hudson), "Patience" (Eddie Murphy, Keith Robinson, Anika Noni Rose) and "Listen" (Beyonce Knowles).

We have been speed-selecting for the past few days between "And I Am Telling You …" and "I Am Changing" (Hudson).

Elliot Yamin

Speaking of changing … Elliot Yamin, our favorite vocalist on last year's "American Idol," sports a hot new look on the cover of his self-titled CD, now on sale in the US in tandem with Chris Daughtry's album, also self-titled, for $25.

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IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 12:35 / 2:50 / 5:05 / 7:20 / 9:40
FLUSHED AWAY 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
NUMBER 23 1:10 / 5:30 / 9:50
BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA 3:20 / 7:40
Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
PRIMEVAL 12:25 / 2:45 / 5:05 / 7:25 / 9:45
MUSIC & LYRICS 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45
GHOST RIDER 4:50 / 9:50
EPIC MOVIE 12:30 / 2:50 / 7:40
DREAMGIRLS 12:35 / 3:20 / 6:05 / 8:50
Ali MALL 5
1 PRIMEVAL 1:15 / 3:35 / 5:55 / 8:15
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:20 / 3:35 / 5:50 / 8:05
3 YOU GOT ME 12:00 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
4 THE PROMISE 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
5 GHOST RIDER 1:05 / 3:35 / 6:05 / 8:35
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From page E1

He said he told the kids that challenges and failures were not the end of a show biz career. "I said they would always experience these, but they should do their best, and maybe they'd survive," Moreno said.

He also urged the kids to say no to drugs, which would certainly ruin their careers and their lives.

Another message Moreno imparted was, "Save money." He said he himself developed the habit, saving half of his earnings, while still working at Clover.

"They should know how to handle money," he said. "I've seen a lot of popular stars who ended up broke. Maybe, they trusted the people around them too much, or maybe they thought stardom would never end."

JENNIFER Hudson accepts her fifth award for "Dreamgirls." REUTERS

Hudson, Whitaker still winning 'em

LOS ANGELES—OSCAR WINners Forest Whitaker and Jennifer Hudson kept their winning streaks alive, while "Grey's Anatomy" star Isaiah Washington claimed a Best Actor prize at the 38th annual NAACP Image Awards, which celebrate diversity in the arts. "Ugly Betty" took top television honors.

Hudson, a former "American Idol" finalist, garnered a Best Supporting Actress award for her role in the musical "Dreamgirls," the same category she won at the Oscars, Golden Globes and SAG Awards this year.

"There is nothing like being recognized and honored by your own," said Hudson.

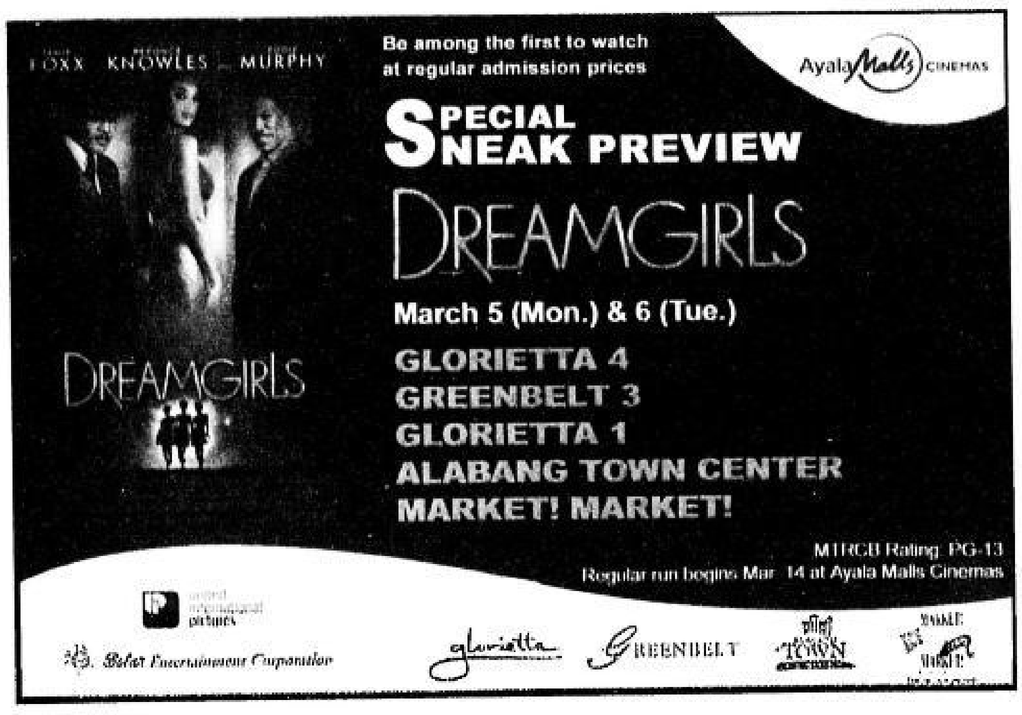
Whitaker, who also won at the Oscars, Globes and SAG, earned a Best Actor prize for "The Last King of Scotland" at Friday's ceremony, which honors projects and individuals who promote diversity in the arts.

"Doing this role gave me so many blessings," said Whitaker, who plays a Ugandan dictator in the film. "One was being able to go back to Africa and touch my roots."

Washington, who has been sharply criticized for uttering a gay slur on the set of his hit show, scored Best Actor for a Drama Series.

"I'm humbled and honored to be recognized by the NAACP," he said. "The first time I was up here I felt deserving of something. This time I feel privileged."

"The Pursuit of Happyness," starring Will Smith and his son, won Best Picture. Keke Palmer nabbed Best Actress for "Akeelah and the Bee," and Djimon Hounsou took Best Supporting Actor for "Blood Diamond." AP



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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 NUMBER 23	2 PRIMEVAL	3 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA	4 YOU GOT ME
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 FLUSHED AWAY	2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	3 THX PRIMEVAL GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA	5 THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND	6 YOU GOT ME	7 EPIC MOVIE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 PRIMEVAL	2 YOU GOT ME		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MUSIC & LYRICS GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	4 FLUSHED AWAY GUARANTEED SEATS	5 YOU GOT ME GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX YOU GOT ME GUARANTEED SEATS	2 PRIMEVAL		
	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 MUSIC & LYRICS	5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 YOU GOT ME	2 PRIMEVAL	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 THE FOUNTAIN
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 YOU GOT ME	2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING		
	3 GHOST RIDER	4 PRIMEVAL	5 FLUSHED AWAY	

At the Activity Center

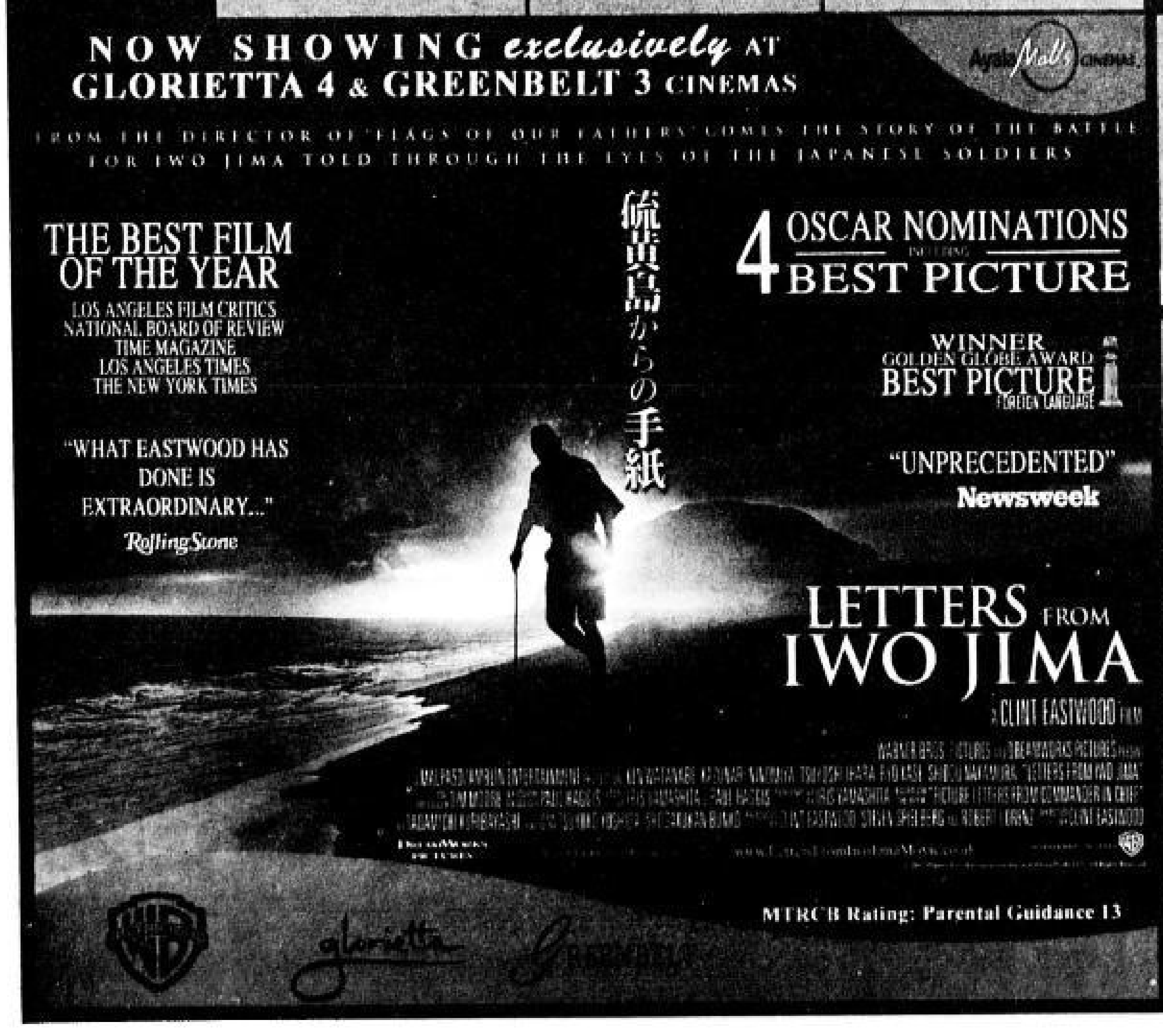
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness February 28 to March 18, 2007	Anson's Exhibit March 5 to 23, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 16 to 18, 2007	Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 9 to 11, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Lila Almario
March 7 to 18, 2007

Glorietta Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS
at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
February 15 to March 27, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org



NOW SHOWING exclusively AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS
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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS' COMES THE STORY OF THE BATTLE FOR IWO JIMA TOLD THROUGH THE EYES OF THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS
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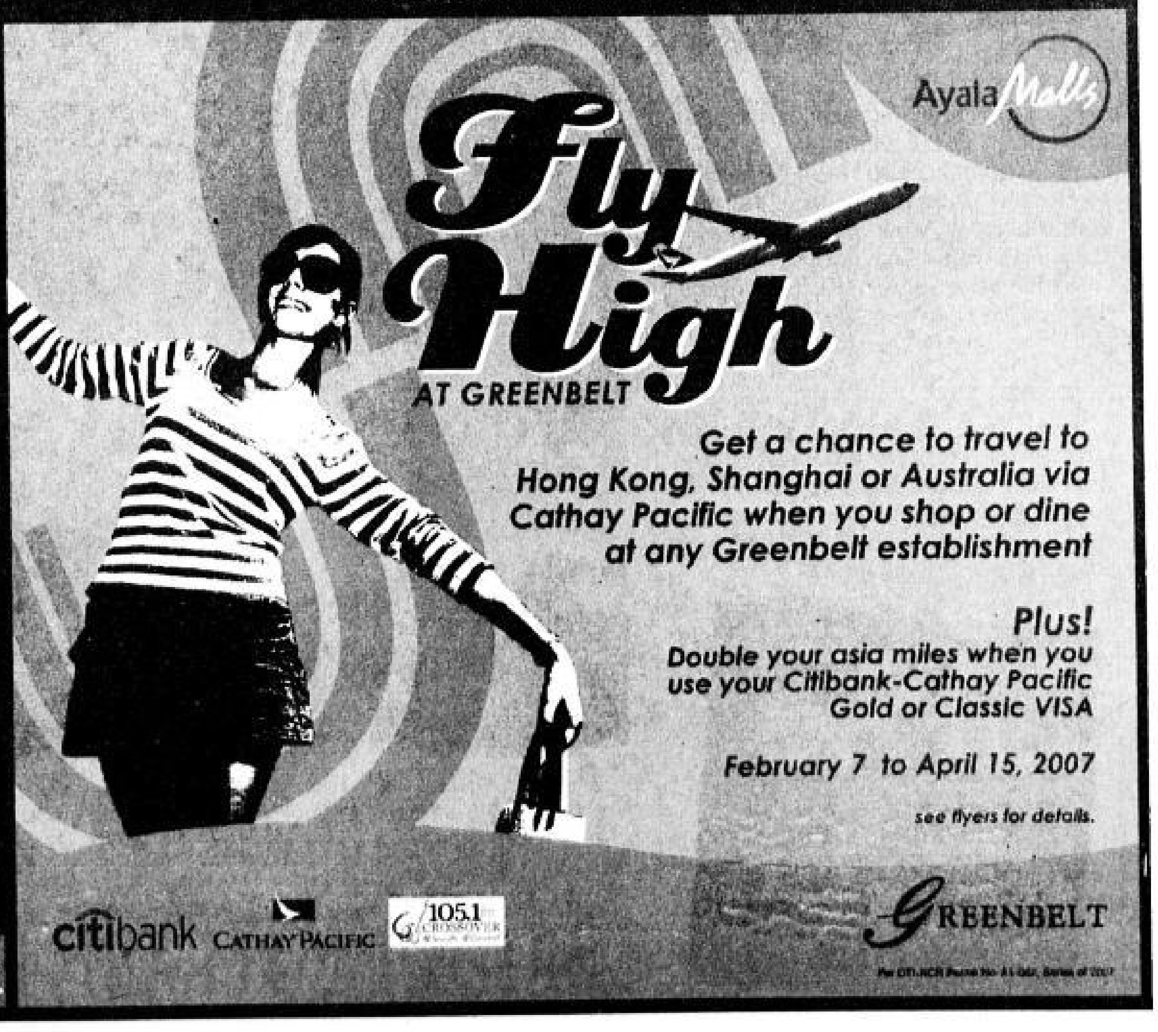
TIME MAGAZINE
LOS ANGELES TIMES
THE NEW YORK TIMES
"WHAT EASTWOOD HAS DONE IS EXTRAORDINARY..." Rolling Stone
硫黄島からの手紙
4 OSCAR NOMINATIONS INCLUDING BEST PICTURE
WINNER GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD BEST PICTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
"UNPRECEDENTED" Newsweek
LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA
A CLINT EASTWOOD FILM
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13
glorietta Greenbelt



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'SPIDER-MAN 3'
Tobey Maguire, left, and James Franco were in Tokyo this week promoting their latest movie, "Spider-Man 3," which premieres there on April 16, ahead of other countries. In the movie, the hero discovers his dark side. But, Maguire said, "Going into that part of Peter Parker was fun and interesting." Director Sam Raimi added, "Everybody makes mistakes—even a hero." AFP

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

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GREENHILLS
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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 **YOU GOT ME** 11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40 6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35 GP

CINEMA 2 **PRIMEVAL** 10:45 , 1:00 , 3:15 5:30 , 7:45 , 10:00 R-13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 **ITS A BOY GIRL THING** 11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40 6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35 PG-13

CINEMA 4 **FLUSHED AWAY** 11:15 , 1:25 , 3:35 5:45 , 7:55 , 10:10 GP

CINEMA 5 **DREAMGIRLS** 11:35 , 2:20 , 5:05 7:50 , 10:35 PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

March 06 , 2007	EDNA LEDESMA	8:00 PM
	" DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "	
March 16 & 23 , 2007	SITTI IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30 , 2007	" TABANG " PILITA C. SEC. JOEY LINA SEC. ANGIE REYES CHAIRMAN BAYANI F	8:00 PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 9 , 2007	DAVE	8:30 PM
March 10 , 2007	JOHN LESACA	8:00 PM
March 15 , 22 , 29 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

Will Smith & son in a heartwarming true story
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BEST ACTOR WILL SMITH

"★★★★ ! ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR. WILL SMITH GIVES THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER."
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"TWO THUMBS UP"
Richard Roeper and Aisha Tyler, Guest Critic, EBERT & ROEPER

"A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE...,RAISE A GLASS TO SALUTE WILL SMITH... HE EMERGES A WINNER."
Leah Rozen, PEOPLE

"A TOUCHING MOVIE, WITH A BEAUTIFUL AND UNDERSTATED PERFORMANCE FROM WILL SMITH."
Owen Gleiberman, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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Shawn Edwards, FOX-TV

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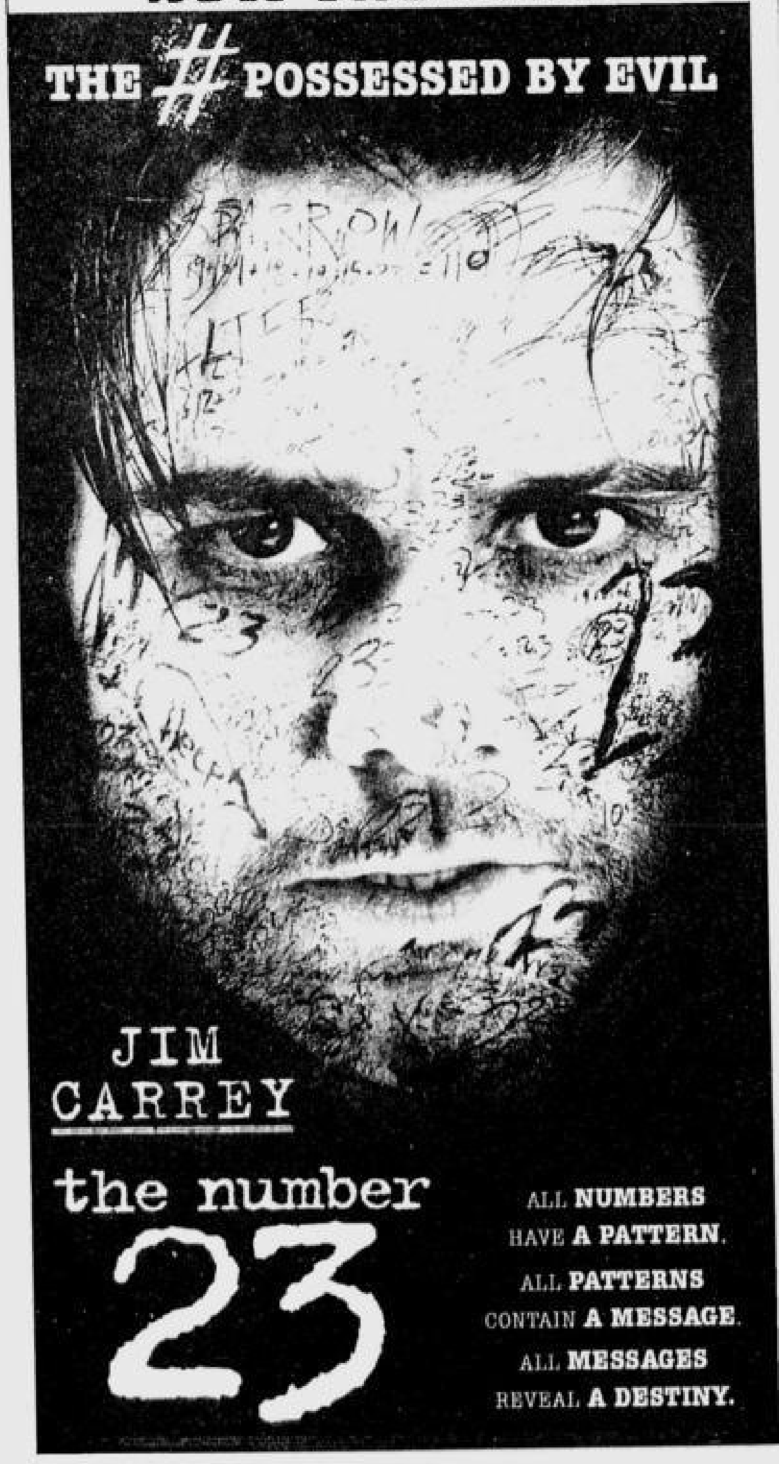


THE # POSSESSED BY EVIL

JIM CARREY

the number 23

ALL NUMBERS HAVE A PATTERN.
ALL PATTERNS CONTAIN A MESSAGE.
ALL MESSAGES REVEAL A DESTINY.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 FLUSHED AWAY
DREAM GIRLS
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 YOU GOT ME
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
PREMIERE
PRIMEVAL

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 PRIMEVAL
2 APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 GHOST RIDER
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 IT'S A BOY THING
2 FLUSHED AWAY
DREAM GIRLS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

starmall EDSA - SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 PRIMEVAL
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) GHOST RIDER
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994
1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PRIMEVAL
4

THEATRES
1 MUSIC & LYRICS
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena tel (042) 660-6271
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BABEL
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE PROMISE
3 BABEL
4 APOCALYPTO

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 GHOST RIDER
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 PRIMEVAL
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 YOU GOT ME
9 NUMBER 23
10 THE PROMISE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 TROIKA
2 THE PROMISE

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 RESERVED

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 SAPLOT
3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 THE MESSENGER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 YOU GOT ME
2 RED ROSES
3 THE PROMISE
4 TROIKA
5 THE PROMISE

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE PROMISE
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 CODENAME THE CLEANER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 THE PROMISE
2 THE MESSENGER
3 TROIKA
4 RESERVED

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TROIKA
2 THE MESSENGER

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA
Ticket Price THX:P161 131 Indie Sine:101 632-9116

1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA • THX
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
2 DREAMGIRLS Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
3 GHOST RIDER
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
4 FLUSHED AWAY 1:20 3:25 5:30
EPIC MOVIE 7:30 9:50
5 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
6 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 KABUL EXPRESS 12:20 2:40 5:00
MUSIC and LYRICS 7:20 9:40
8 PEPOT ARTISTA
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
9 THE NUMBER 23
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
10 PRIMEVAL
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

EXCLUSIVE SCREENING at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD GALLERIA
February 28 to March 06

This is a thrilling story, spanning 48 hours, of five individuals linked by hate and fear, but brought together by fate to finally recognize each other. Five people from different worlds, their paths are destined to cross in a ruthless country devastated by war - Afghanistan.

MTRCB Rating: PG13

KABUL EXPRESS

ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 536-7809 to 12

1 YOU GOT ME 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
2 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA 12:20 2:20 4:20
THE NUMBER 23 6:20 8:15 10:00
3 FLUSHED AWAY
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
4 DREAMGIRLS
Sneak Preview
5 PRIMEVAL
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
7 ROME and JULIET
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

METRO EAST
Ticket Price P100 682-8193 - 682-8199

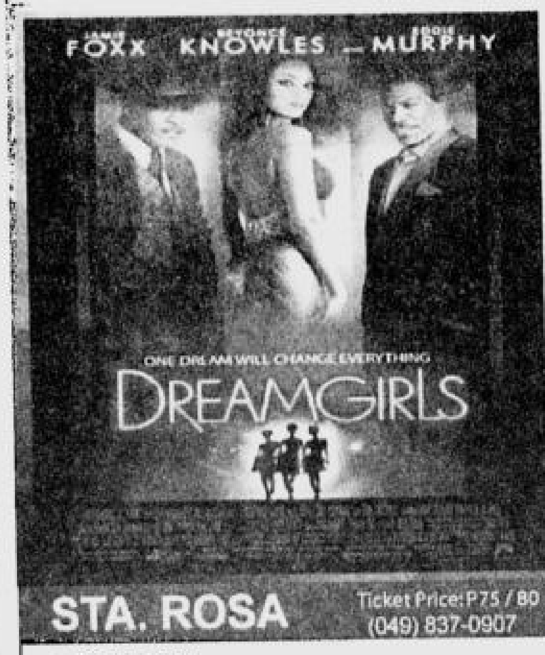
1 THE NUMBER 23
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
2 FLUSHED AWAY
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
3 YOU GOT ME
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
4 EPIC MOVIE
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:00
5 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
6 DREAMGIRLS
Sneak Preview
7 PRIMEVAL
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
8 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price P97 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 GHOST RIDER

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P102 687-5378

1 PRIMEVAL
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40
2 FLUSHED AWAY
12:20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40
3 YOU GOT ME
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40
4 DREAMGIRLS
Sneak Preview



FOXX KNOWLES MURPHY
ONE DREAM WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING
DREAMGIRLS

SNEAK PREVIEWS
robinsons movieworld
- Galleria
- Ermita
- Metro East
- Pioneer

March 5 and 6

REGULAR Showing: MARCH 14
MTRCB Rating: PG13

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (049) 837-0907

1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

LIPA
Ticket Price: P 90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 TROIKA
5 BABEL

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332

1 BOA
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 TROIKA
4 THE FOUNTAIN

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PRIMENVAL
2 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (046) 875-1927

1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 TROIKA
3 THE PROMISE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 PRIMEVAL
6 GHOST RIDER

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 MUSIC and LYRICS
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 APOCALYPTO

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 APOCALYPTO
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 GHOST RIDER

Eddie Murphy on 'Dreamgirls'

EDDIE Murphy as James "Thunder" Early in "Dreamgirls"

TAKE FIVE

EDDIE MURPHY TALKS ABOUT HIS notable performance as R&B singer James "Thunder" Early in "Dreamgirls," for which he won a Golden Globe in the Best Supporting Actor category.

What interested you in "Dreamgirls"?

When they came to me about it—the part that they offered me—I remembered that being a standout part. Cleavant Derricks won the Tony for the role. It's rare to get to be in something like this. A cast this strong, combined with a director this strong (Bill Condon) creates a lot of opportunities for great performances.

Tell us about your character.

Jimmy Early is an up-and-coming R&B singer, kind of like right on the edge of having some national exposure. He's known in the inner-city communities, and he's right there where he's bubbling under.

And what is the trajectory of your character?

"Cadillac Car" is a song that he writes and thinks can be a big hit. But just before it breaks out to become a really big record, a white group cuts the song, and turns it into a bubble gum pop hit. Ours falls off the charts. We start playing dirty.

But your manager Curtis' (Jamie Foxx) attempted makeover doesn't exactly work.

He tries to smooth Jimmy Early's edges out, to make him more accessible to the pop crowd. But that's not who Jimmy Early is. So, it turns into a horror show. Jimmy doesn't do a smooth show. He does his typical Jimmy Early pumpin' and humpin' and grindin' act, and in a way, he kinda knows what he's doing when he's doing it.

How does Jimmy cross paths with The Dreamettes?

For messing around with his back-up singers so much, I think some girls quit. So, he's caught in a bind, because he doesn't have anybody to sing in the background. He has to get some background singers real quick—that's how he meets the Dreamgirls.

How did you like working with Jamie Foxx?

What's really cool about Jamie in this movie is that it's classic leading man stuff. No flash, just acted out with subtleties and nuances, and all this little acting stuff that he's doing.

What do you have to say about Beyonce's performance?

Beyonce brings the whole star power. She's the "It Girl." She's got everything: sex appeal and charm, a great voice, and she's a good actress.

And how was it working with a veteran like Danny Glover for the first time?

Having made pictures for 25 years, I'm getting to be one of the old jacks in the movies. So, it's cool for me to work with an actor you can watch and learn from. And Danny Glover is a master actor, like fine wine. It's fun to just sit back and watch a master do his thing.

What about relative newcomer Anika Noni Rose?

She was just a bright, little light on the set immediately. When they first cast her, they said, "She's from the stage, and bubbly." And she is like that. She just brings a real positive, bubbly spirit to the set. And she's super, super, multi-talented.

Did you enjoy being directed by Bill Condon?

Just his presence made me more confident. I knew I was in good hands. And if an actor is confident, it makes a big difference in his performance.

Kiddie TV presents a 'sport-acular' summer

KID FIT

NICKELODEON OPENS MARCH WITH new episodes of "Lazy Town's" "sport-acular" adventure, featuring Stephanie and exercise superhero Sportacus.

More action-packed stories, athletic stunts and high energy music videos are in store in the series starting March 12 at 7 a.m. and 10 a.m.

A special episode recap of "Avatar, The Legend of Aang" plus a one-hour special airs before the launch of the new season.

The special, "The Siege of the Nation," brings kids to the North Pole, as Aang and Katara continue their training while Admiral Zhao brings a large force up against the Northern Water tribe in his quest to catch the Avatar.

The episodes air on March 10, 11 a.m., March 13, 2:30 p.m. and March 16, 6 p.m.

"LAZYTOWN"

Cartoon series

The brand-new series, "Johnny Test," is featured on Cartoon Network on weekends at 10:30 a.m.

The series chronicles the adventures of an ordinary suburban 11-year-old boy who is a willing and fearless test subject for his 13-year-old super-genius scientist twin sisters' experiments.

New episodes of "Peep and the Big Wide World" start tomorrow, airing weekdays at 8:30 a.m.

Peep, a newly-hatched chick, and his bird friends, Chirp the robin and Quack the duck, explore their park surroundings and learn about basic scientific concepts.

Also to be featured are the following programs: "Batman: Mask of the Phantasm," March 10, 8 p.m.; "Acceleracers: Ignition," March 11, 8 p.m.; "An American Tale: The Treasure of Manhattan Island," March 17, 8 p.m.; "Tom & Jerry The Movie," March 18, 8 a.m.; "Thomas and Friends," March 19, 10:45 a.m.; "Alvin & The Chipmunks Meet Frankenstein," March 24, 8 a.m.; "Daffy Duck's Quackbusters," March 25, 8 a.m.; and "Party Wagon," March 31, 8 a.m.

New animés

The long-running animé, "Cyborg 009," is Hero TV's featured "Animé of the Month" while the 2006 cartoon "Di-Gata Defenders" is the feature in "Laking Hero."

Also to premiere this March are the fourth season of "Mirmo de Pon Golden," "Susie and Marvy," "Beet the Vandel Buster," "Vandred 1st Stage," "Bastof Lemon" and "Monkey Typhoon."

This month, the animé channel launches the contest "Class of the Titans: The Chosen One" for outstanding students who will be chosen to represent their school in a battle for leadership, sports, arts and academic domination.

TOM AND JERRY

THE COMPANY

Those who love music and animé can also compose a jingle for TV channel with the theme "Dahil Dito sa Hero, Ikaw ang Bida."

Interested parties may tune in to Hero TV on Channel 44.

Vocal workshop

The vocal group The CompanY, together with United MultiArt Productions Inc., will be offering a vocal performance workshop for children ages 8 to 12.

The workshop will be personally handled by a member of The CompanY for six weeks (three classes a week), from April 16 to May 27.

The workshop, which will provide intensive musical and stage instructions, will be capped by a recital which will be open to the public.

A commemorative CD will be produced for those performing for the recital.

Exposed breasts get cable channel in trouble

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WHILE MAJOR PLAYERS LIKE HBO and Star World practice self-regulation and classification, other foreign cable TV channels can't escape the long arm of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB).

TV Español or TVE (channel 73 on Sky Cable) got in trouble recently after airing scenes showing a topless model, in violation of MTRCB rules and its Memorandum of Agreement with cable channel organizations.

Special agents of the movie-TV board reported the violation on Jan. 30, noting that TVE "showed still photos of double breast exposure of a woman from 8:50 a.m. to 9:15 a.m."

MTRCB chair Ma. Consoliza Laguardia called a meeting with the representatives of different companies, including Juno Henares-Chuidian of Central CATV or Sky Cable, Renato F. Bautista of Destiny Cable Inc., Estrellita Juliano-Tamano of the Federation of International Cable TV Association of the Philippines (FICAP) and Allan Dungao of the Philippine Cable Television Association, Inc. (PCTA).

In the preliminary discussion held on Feb. 12, lawyer Basilio Bolante represented FICAP; Peachy Urquiola, Destiny Cable; and Anne Manalansan, PCTA.

Laguardia pointed out that TVE had initially "solarized" the offensive shots, but later scenes "freely showed exposed breasts and the mashing of breasts."

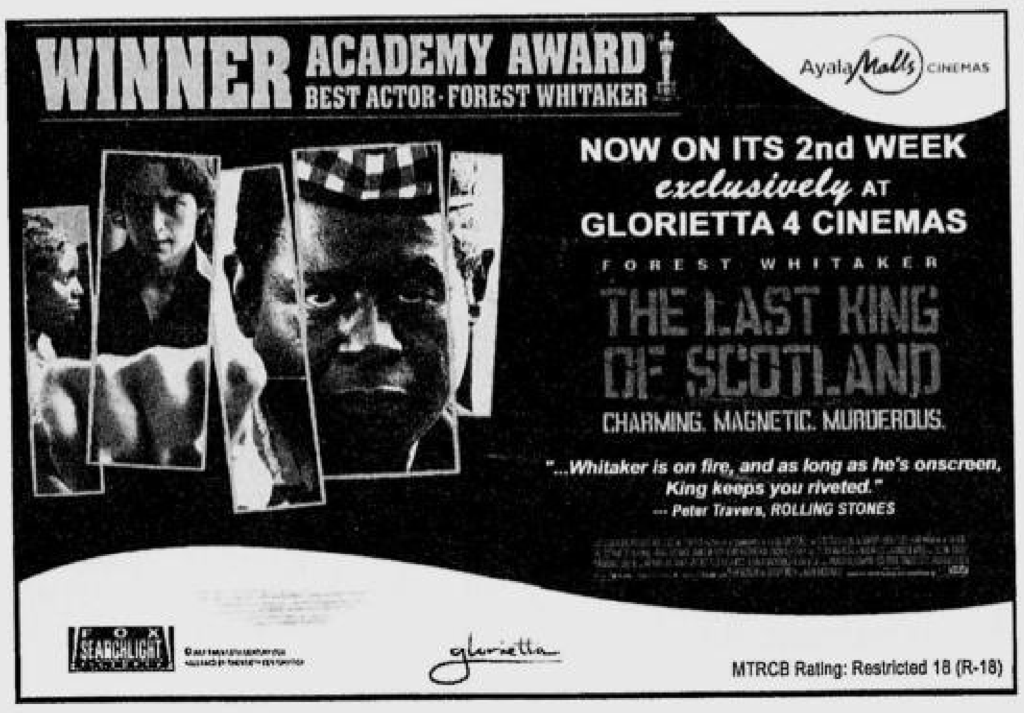
"The program ran for almost 30 minutes," Laguardia told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview on Saturday.

In a judgment signed by Laguardia on Feb. 13, it was decreed that TVE would be suspended for five days.

Laguardia stressed that "failure to comply with the order" would compel the movie-TV board "to refer the matter to the National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) for appropriate action."

Laguardia told INQUIRER that the involved companies "had complied with the suspension order."

She noted in the Feb. 13 letter: "The [counsel and representatives of] FICAP and PCTA did not only [agree with the] sanctions ... but even committed to help in [their clients'/members'] compliance ... pursuant to the MOA between the MTRCB and PCTA... and FICAP."



WINNER ACADEMY AWARD
BEST ACTOR · FOREST WHITAKER
Ayala Malls CINEMAS
NOW ON ITS 2nd WEEK
exclusively AT
GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS
FOREST WHITAKER
THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND
CHARMING. MAGNETIC. MURDEROUS.
"...Whitaker is on fire, and as long as he's onscreen, King keeps you riveted."
— Peter Travers, ROLLING STONES
FOX SEARCHLIGHT
glorietta
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

FLUSHED AWAY G 2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00	THE NUMBER 23 R13 1:25,3:35	DREAM GIRLS PG13 2:20,5:00,7:40,10:20
PRIMEVAL R13 1:50,4:00,6:10,8:20	YOU GOT ME G 1:10,3:25,5:40, 7:55,10:10	IT'S A BOYGIRL THING PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41
MATINNEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. – MONDAY-FRIDAY

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